

asbpa

American Shore & Beach Preservation Association

Advocating for healthy coastlines

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September 12, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso,
Chair, Environment and Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Tom Carper,
Ranking Member, Environment and Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Bill Shuster,
Chair, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Peter DeFazio,
Ranking Member, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairmen Barrasso & Shuster, Ranking Members Carper & DeFazio,

The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) is pleased to support Title I of *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018*. Passing a water resources development act (WRDA) every congress allows our nation's coastal communities to invest in the critical natural infrastructure, such as beaches, dunes and wetlands, that keep them protected from flooding, storms and hurricanes. As Section 1101 of the bill

outlines, *"flood control, beach erosion control and shoreline protection... environmental protection, restoration, and enhancement... benefit all Americans, and... water resources development projects are critical to maintaining the country's economic prosperity, national security, and environmental protection."*

By authorizing project construction and studies, and by setting policy for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), WRDA is essential for effective management of our coastlines and to increase coastal resilience across the United States. We urge Congress to pass this critical legislation as soon as possible.

ASBPA particularly supports:

- 1) **Section 1102, "Study Of The Future Of The United States Army Corps Of Engineers"; Section 1103, "Study On Economic And Budgetary Analyses"; and Section 1204, "GAO Study On Benefit-Cost Analysis Reforms."** These studies will review and provide recommendations for how USACE functions, how it budgets projects and engages the public, and how projects are valued. The inclusion of a National Academies study to look at, *"the ability of the Corps of Engineers to carry out its statutory missions and responsibilities"* is vital in

assuring the United States continues to receive the best possible water resources services and the best available science and technology support. A National Academies study that examines “*the economic principles and analytical methodologies currently used by or applied to the Corps of Engineers to formulate, evaluate, and budget for water resources development projects*” will help ensure USACE budgets and uses taxpayer dollars wisely and transparently. The “*study on the benefit-cost procedures of the Secretary and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget*” will help ensure that water resource projects are being appropriately valued for the variety of benefits they provide, and the United States is investing in projects that provide the greatest benefits for the least cost. ASBPA is eager to work with Congress and the National Academies on completing these studies and ensuring the studies fairly reflect USACE’s work and role in coastal resilience.

- 2) **Sections 1148 and 1130, “Beneficial Use of Dredged Material.”** These sections increase the number of authorized pilot projects for the beneficial use of dredged material from 10 to 20 (originally authorized in WRDA 2016) and ease restrictions on private landowners ability to accept a one-time nourishment through USACE’s continuing authorities program (CAP) 204, “Regional Sediment Management.” These sections support the nation’s ongoing need to use dredged sediment as a resource, rather than disposing of it as a waste product.
- 3) **Section 1112, “Hurricane And Storm Damage Protection Program,”** which authorizes \$75 million to contract multiple hurricane and storm damage protection beach projects across state and USACE district boundaries with a single contract. By bundling projects along a shoreline, construction costs can be reduced due to minimizing dredging mobilization/de-mobilization costs and coordinated planning and permitting.
- 4) **Section 1160, “Emergency Response To Natural Disasters,”** which fixes a problem that stemmed from language in WRRDA 2014. This section allows for flood control and coastal emergency funding to be used to restore coastal risk management project, including beaches, “*to either the pre-storm level or the design level of protection, whichever provides greater protection.*” This language provides a small, but critical fix for communities who had been properly maintaining their federally authorized beach only to see FCCE funds leave their beach worse off after a storm than it was before.
- 5) **Section 1219, “Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study”; and Section 1228, “Coastal Texas Study.”** Implementing a Great Lakes study and expediting a Coastal Texas study will help improve the resilience on thousands of miles of U.S. coastline, better informing future coastal management needs and response.

America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 includes policies and projects that will help improve coastal communities’ resilience, but many of its best provisions are studies and pilot projects. These are important steps toward a making a more effective, more efficient Army Corps of Engineers, and helping coastal communities across the country. However, studies and pilot projects are intended to provide information for future systemic changes, which underscores the importance of revisiting and passing a WRDA every congress. Just as this year’s WRDA builds upon the success of 2016 and 2014, Congress will need to authorize, implement, and expand upon the recommendations and results of the studies and pilot projects outlined above.

ASBPA looks forward to working with your committees to ensure passage of the *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018* in the coming weeks, and working with you over the coming years to continue to improve our nation's water infrastructure, in particular our natural coastal infrastructure, such as beaches, dunes and wetlands.

Sincerely,



Derek Brockbank
Executive Director



Anthony P. Pratt
President