The Water Resources Development Act of 2024

Delivering for Delaware

The Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA 2024) strengthens the projects and programs of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in Delaware. This legislation continues the 2-year reauthorization cycle for Water Resources Development Acts, ensuring timely congressional approvals for Corps studies and projects.

As the lowest-lying state in the nation, Delaware relies on partnerships with the Corps to address some of the state's biggest challenges, like sea level rise, inland flooding and other effects of climate change, all of which impact the state's economy. The Corps is a key partner in Delaware's work to address these challenges. The Corps works with Delaware to protect and renourish Delaware's beaches, restore Delaware's ecosystems and construct and maintain infrastructure that supports Delaware's economy including the Port of Wilmington and intracoastal waterways.

WRDA 2024 protects Delaware's economy and shorelines from the threat of climate change by:

- Establishing the Delaware Coastal System Program to promote efficiency and share resources among the many critical coastal hurricane and storm risk reduction projects throughout Delaware. By creating this overarching program for all of Delaware's authorized beaches, the Corps and the state will be able to promote a more effective use of federal and state funds across projects, improve state-wide planning efforts and reduce redundancies during restorations.

- Directing the Corps to reevaluate the Lewes Beach project to determine which additional areas should be included for beach renourishment along the Lewes shoreline.

- Investing in Delaware's beaches and beach economy by reducing the local contribution requirement for renourishing Rehoboth, Dewey, Bethany and South Bethany beaches from 35 percent to 20 percent. The bill also reduces the local contribution requirement for renourishing Fenwick beach from 50 percent to 20 percent.

- Adding Broadkill Beach to the Bay Beach restoration initiative so that the state cost match to renourish Broadkill is reduced from 35 percent to 10 percent like the rest of the Bay Beaches.

- Reducing the state contribution requirement from 50 percent to 10 percent for completing the Delaware Back Bay Study. This Corps study recommends projects to increase community resilience to coastal storms in communities along the inland bays, including several economically disadvantaged communities. To support these resiliency efforts, WRDA 2024 establishes that the federal government will be responsible for 90 percent of the cost of construction.

WRDA 2024 enhances the resilience of inland Delaware communities and the state as a whole by:

- Authorizing feasibility studies for flood risk management projects for flood-prone Delaware communities including Milton and Wilmington.

- Authorizing a new Delaware Inland Bays Watershed Study to comprehensively consider ecosystem restoration needs in the inland bay area.

- Authorizing Delaware State University to conduct research on water resources and environmental quality in collaboration with the Corps.

- Authorizing a new $25 million environmental infrastructure project for Delaware's bay beach communities to help improve sewers, stormwater treatment systems, water storage and other related wastewater infrastructure.

- Authorizing a new $25 million environmental infrastructure project for Delaware's Atlantic beach communities to help improve sewers, stormwater treatment systems, water storage and other related wastewater infrastructure.

- Authorizing a new $25 million environmental infrastructure project in Wilmington, Delaware to help improve sewers, stormwater treatment systems, water storage and other related wastewater infrastructure.

- Increasing the authorized funding for environmental infrastructure projects in New Castle, Kent and Sussex Counties to $40 million for each county.