

WRDA

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2026

Prepared by Democratic Staff of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure



The House Committee on
Transportation & Infrastructure

THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2026

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is essential to everyday life. Water resources development projects, carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), modernize and maintain ports and inland waterways, protect communities from flood and storm risk, and restore natural ecosystems. WRDAs ensure that communities of all sizes and economic means can be resilient to floods, extreme weather events, drought, and other impacts of climate change, as well as help communities secure their economic futures through meeting future water supply, hydropower, and recreational needs.

WRDAs have a long history of bipartisan, bicameral support and this Congress is no exception. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held four hearings, incorporated feedback from more than three-quarters of House Members as well as countless local communities and stakeholders to develop the bipartisan Water Resources Development Act of 2026, introduced by Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA), Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO), Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment Ranking Member Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL) and Subcommittee Chairman Mike Collins (R-GA).

WRDA 2026, the seventh consecutive WRDA since 2014, continues the Committee's bipartisan tradition of crafting a new WRDA every two years to respond to local water resource needs. WRDA 2026 provides the Corps with the authority to study and construct the next generation of water resources development projects, helps all communities, especially rural, Tribal, and disadvantaged communities, affordably address local needs, and advances continued local resiliency efforts.

IMPROVES CRITICAL WATER RESOURCES INFRASTRUCTURE

WRDA 2026 improves critical water resources infrastructure to protect human health, restore natural ecosystems, and boost the U.S. economy. It advances projects that improve wastewater, stormwater, and flood control infrastructure and invests in ports, harbors, and inland waterways.

- Authorizes the construction of **10 projects submitted to Congress since the enactment of WRDA 2024**.. These reports are the final recommendations to Congress by the Corps on rigorously studied water resources infrastructure priorities.
- Authorizes **over 100 new feasibility studies** for future water resources development projects, and **24** studies to modify existing projects.
- Provides more than **\$6 billion in new and modified environmental infrastructure authorities** to address the water and wastewater needs of local communities.

EMPOWERS COMMUNITIES TO WORK WITH CORPS

WRDA 2026 enables all communities to understand, engage with, and benefit from the work of the Corps— whether that assistance take the form of technical assistance, planning and design assistance, or the study, design, and construction of a water resources development project.

- **Empowers non-Federal project sponsors** to work with the Corps to develop, plan, and implement project studies that address local needs in an appropriate timeframe.
- Creates a **new Office of Technical Assistance and Community Outreach** to provide a one-stop shop for communities, especially rural, Tribal, and disadvantaged communities, to benefit from the Corps' experience in addressing local water resources challenges.

ENSURES COMMUNITIES REMAIN RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE THREATS

The climate crisis is causing more severe and frequent weather events that jeopardize water resources infrastructure. WRDA 2026 provides communities with the tools they need to face these new threats, from enhancing drought resilience and flood control to addressing ecosystem threats like harmful algal blooms (HABs).

- Creates a new **Office of Water Supply, Water Conservation, and Drought Resilience** to work with communities on projects to protect people and the environment from increasingly severe and prolonged drought.
- Advances new authorities to **implement natural and nature-based alternatives** for flood risk reduction, **address Harmful Algal Blooms and invasive species, beneficially use dredged materials**, mitigate **wildfire risk** and develop **comprehensive plans to address complex flood risk**, including coastal, back bay, riverine and stormwater flows.
- Establishes two new continuing authorities programs (CAPs) to carry out **small-scale projects for drought resiliency and for flood control structure enhancement**.

GROWS THE ECONOMY

WRDA 2026 helps communities invest in projects that create good-paying jobs, bolster local economies and strengthen U.S. economic competitiveness and supply chains.

- Enhances the authority for ports to **partner with the Corps for dredged material management** and to **address contaminated sediments associated with Corps projects**.
- Reaffirms Congress's commitment to **robust investment in harbor maintenance projects that benefit ports of all sizes**, from the largest donor ports to smaller, emerging harbors.
- Creates a new **Office of Alternative Delivery Methods to encourage public-private partnerships** that leverage private sector resources for the public good, creating and sustaining good-paying jobs.
- Creates a new **Office of Inland Navigation Construction Management** to oversee the development and implementation of critical inland waterways navigation projects.
- Sustains the ability of local communities to partner with the Corps for the **expedited construction of small-scale projects** through the Corps' continuing authorities program.
- Directs the Corps to **assess the impact of data centers** on Corps' projects and consider their water consumption in watershed-scale studies.

MAINTAINS CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF THE CORPS

Congress plays an essential role in guiding how the Corps develops and implements projects and programs to tackle America's toughest water resources infrastructure challenges. WRDA 2026 continues the bipartisan tradition of oversight and direction to the Corps' water resources missions to address local water resources needs.

- Reaffirms the need for the Corp to have **open communication with Congress** related to water resources development projects.
- **Directs the Corps to maintain a robust workforce** capable of addressing the statutory responsibilities of the Corps in a timely manner.
- Ensures that **all programs and policies of the Corps are fully utilized** and carried out in a manner that is consistent with the law.

WRDA STILL WORKS

Continuing to pass WRDAs every two years ensures that communities' water resources infrastructure needs are being met, and that Congress exercises proper oversight of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Congress has successfully enacted six consecutive WRDA bills since 2014. With WRDA 2026, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure maintains this bipartisan tradition and continues to set new records on the most consecutive WRDA bills enacted into law.