



Water Resources Development Act 2016 (S. 2848): Summary

- Authorizes 25 Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) projects in 17 states.
- Provides critical flood control programs and infrastructure, including a much needed dam rehabilitation program. Of the 84,000 dams in America, the average dam is 52 years old, and 14,000 are considered high hazard, meaning failure would cause significant loss of life and damage to the surrounding area. The bill authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide assistance to rehabilitate high hazard potential dams. ASCE has worked to advance this legislation for 10 years.
- Builds on the reforms to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) in WRRDA 14 by clarifying increased HMTF funding targets.
- Allows the placement of dredged material in a location other than “the least cost alternative” if any additional costs will be offset by the resulting environmental, flood protection, and resiliency benefits.
- Authorizes critical flood control and coastal hurricane protection projects and studies across the country, including rebuilding levees. It also prioritizes projects in areas prone to sea level rise.
- Updates the Corps emergency rebuilding authority for flood control projects to allow the Corps to rebuild projects *stronger* than originally designed if it will reduce risk of loss of life and property and minimize life cycle rehabilitation costs.
- Authorizes numerous projects to restore precious ecosystems including Florida Everglades, Los Angeles River, the Great Lakes, Columbia River, Puget Sound, Salton Sea, Chesapeake Bay, North Atlantic Coast, Rio Grande, Lake Tahoe, and Long Island Sound.
- Promotes innovative water technologies and research for desalination, water reuse and recycling.
- Improves the nation’s failing water infrastructure by modernizing the State Revolving Loan Fund programs and reauthorized funding for wet weather sewer overflows.
- Responds to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, by providing emergency assistance to Flint and other similar communities across the country facing drinking water contamination.
- Establishes a Clean Water Trust Fund that would provide additional money to water programs by adding a voluntary label industry can opt into if their products are water intensive.
- Provides assistance for replacement of lead service lines in disadvantaged communities.

Q&A

Does this mean that ASCE opposes the House bill ([H.R. 5303](#))?

No. ASCE prefers the Senate bill. The House bill has a very narrow scope. It focuses on Army Corps of Engineers' studies and projects. There are few programmatic changes included in the bill.

Why does ASCE prefer the Senate bill?

In addition to funding Corps studies and projects, the Senate bill makes programmatic changes in a variety of public policy areas that ASCE supports (see S.2848 summary above and blogs posts in the resources section).

What does ASCE want the Senate to do?

ASCE supports Senate leadership bringing S.2848 to the floor for a YES vote. We encourage the Senate to work with the House to find a compromise and pass a WRDA16 bill before the end of the legislative session.

What does ASCE want the House to do?

ASCE encourages the House to work with the Senate to find a compromise and pass a WRDA16 bill before the end of the legislative session.

References

Save America's Infrastructure Blog Posts:

- Raising The Grade: [How the 2016 Water Resources Bill Can Help Improve America's Dams & Levees](#)
- Raising the Grade: [How the 2016 Water Resources Development Act Can Improve America's Ports and Inland Waterways](#)

Policy Statements: http://www.asce.org/public_policy_statements/

ASCE 2013 Report Card on America's Infrastructure: www.infrastructurereportcard.org

ASCE Failure to Act report covering ports and inland waterways at: www.asce.org/failuretoact

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