

May 31, 2018 – VOLUME 15, ISSUE 5

Water Infrastructure Legislation on the Move on Capitol Hill

Legislation to reauthorize the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) has started to move on Capitol Hill and confidence is high that Congress will complete work on the bill this year.

On May 22, the Senate Environment & Public Works (EPW) Committee [passed its version of WRDA reauthorization by a vote of 21 to 0](#). Although America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 ([S. 2800](#)) is primarily focused on programs and projects administered by the Army Corps of Engineers, it contains a number of provisions aimed at increasing investment and improving efficiencies on other areas, including sewers and drinking water.

Among other things, S. 2800 would:

- Streamline Army Corps project delivery by setting a two-year goal to complete feasibility studies, eliminating the need for multiple cost-benefit analyses for a single project, and enhancing project data sharing between the Corps and non-federal partners.
- Direct a number of new feasibility studies and authorize (and deauthorize) navigation, flood control, water supply and eco-system management projects (to see all the projects included in the bill, [click here](#)).
- Establish a storm water infrastructure funding task force comprised of representatives of public, private, and federal entities to identify ways to improve funding and financing of storm water infrastructure.
- Reauthorize the [Water Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act](#), which provides a number of tools for public and private entities to support sewer and drinking water construction activities and direct studies on ways to improve WIFIA.
- Create a new grant program to support workforce development in the water utility sector.

From a Member: Pipe Survival in a Hostile Environment

A team of experts from ACPPA member Thompson Pipe Group, in partnership with *Water & Wastes Digest*, presented this session in May – it is now available for immediate viewing on-demand.

Description: The choice of pipe material is vital to the success of any water project, whether it be a water main, a sewer pipe or part of a drainage project. Every project type poses a unique challenge for the design engineer, whose job it is to choose the right pipe material for the job.

In this webinar, each of the most common threats to the survival of a range of different pipe materials will be discussed, and the relative pros and cons of each will be covered. In addition to the potential dangers mentioned above, other hostile environments discussed will include ongoing operating expenses and maintenance and installation expertise or shortcuts.

[Click here for more information and to register.](#)

- Make small and medium water systems (systems that serve a population size of up to 75,000 people) training and technical assistance grants to support Clean Water Act compliance and assist in obtaining financing for eligible clean water projects.

S. 2800 also contains legislative language proposed by Sens. John Boozman (R-Ark.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) aimed at making it easier for states and localities to tap into WIFIA and the SRF resources. The “SRF WIN Act” would encourage states to bundle their projects and streamline the application and approval process. Sen. Boozman, who chairs the Senate’s Fisheries, Water and Wildlife subcommittee wrote about the legislation in the [February 2018 issue of Actionline](#). While several organizations, including the American Society of Consulting Engineers (ASCE) and Water Infrastructure Network, support the proposal, the American Water Works Association, Association of Municipal Water Agencies and Water Environment Foundation oppose it. [The Bond Buyer](#) and [Route Fifty](#) have both run articles explaining each side of the debate.

Meanwhile, on the House side of Capitol Hill, the Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee [unanimously approved its WRDA bill on May 23](#). The House bill ([H.R. 8](#)) is much more modest than its Senate companion and focuses only on traditional Army Corps of Engineers projects (flood control, navigation, etc.).

What’s the Prognosis?

The House will consider WRDA the week of June 4. While Senate leadership has not yet announced a timetable, given strong, bipartisan support and the GOP’s desire to show progress on the president’s infrastructure agenda, it’s not outside the realm of possibility that a WRDA bill could pass both chambers before the July recess.

As the process continues, ACPPA will continue encouraging lawmakers to make water infrastructure – and drinking water in particular – a priority. In early May, ACPPA penned a letter to Congress for the North American Concrete Alliance (NACA) urging swift action on WRDA. NACA is a coalition of 12 leading concrete and cement industry associations, including ACPPA.

“NACA’s members believe it is imperative Congress maintain the established two-year authorization cycle for [WRDA] to ensure predictable investment,” the letter said. “Our coalition urges the increased use of resilient construction techniques to ensure water infrastructure projects resist hazards brought on by major disasters, reduce the magnitude or duration of disruptions and ensure structures are better able to withstand potentially disruptive events. Not only does resilient construction help save lives, it also reduces the costs borne by taxpayers in the wake of disasters.”

“Congress also should seize the opportunity presented by the WRDA process to tackle other water infrastructure challenges,” the letter continued. “ASCE has given the nation’s drinking water and sewer infrastructure D and D+ grades respectively. WRDA can and should be a vehicle to increase investment in these areas (e.g., by increasing state revolving fund authorizations and lifting the cap on private activity bonds for water projects) and improve the efficiency with which federal resources are delivered to states and localities.” 

Pressure Pipe Post

ACPPA's Monthly Source for Industry News

May 2018

To keep members aware of the activities of government and standards organizations, we regularly sweep public databases and publications for the industry-specific terms indicated below. We then provide our members with links to documents identified in the search. Please note that in some cases the URLs may link to subscription-only databases. The purpose of this service is to identify emerging threats and trends as well as opportunities for collective action by ACPPA.

NEWS RESULTS

Community

Forced to Choose Between a Job — and a Community

05/28/2018 https://www.salon.com/2018/05/28/forced-to-choose-between-a-job-and-a-community_partner/

The largest employer in Adams County, Ohio closes its coal-fired power plants

MU's Engineers Without Borders Provides Reliable Water for Town in Panama

05/04/2018 <https://www.themaneater.com/stories/campus/mu%E2%80%99s-engineers-without-borders-provides-reliable-water-for-town-in-panama>

The MU chapter of Engineers Without Borders is approaching the end of its project for clean water in Majé de Chimán, Panama. They have designed and began to implement water filtration, distribution and storage systems.

Infrastructure Issues

Will the White House Sinkhole Keep Growing?

05/23/2018 <http://www.worldpronews.com/50598/1180/290/10682686cb9bd69e4dbb469d9205969781c39fe0>

While sinkholes — depressions in the ground caused by a collapse or sinking of land — can grow into rather unsettling, gaping holes capable of swallowing houses in some parts of the U.S., it's extremely unlikely that anything of this sort will happen near the White House.

[Florida] Massive Hole on Beach Blvd. Gives Glimpse into Underground Infrastructure Network

05/22/2018 <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/massive-hole-on-beach-blvd-gives-glimpse-into-underground-infrastructure-network/77-557124367>

As work to fill and repave the spot where a massive hole opened up on Beach Boulevard nears completion, an expert provides new insight into the vast infrastructure network just below the surface of many roads.

[Maryland] Crews Repairing Third Water Main Break in Four Days in Halfway

05/22/2018 https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/news/local/crews-repairing-third-water-main-break-in-four-days-in/article_ba9e62de-5dc3-11e8-a53f-07cfd40a543.html

The hole was yards from an asphalt patch in the road over which there were bright orange cones. That was the site of one of the other two breaks that occurred recently in that stretch.

[California] Lathrop OKs \$279K of Storm Line Repairs

05/15/2018 <https://www.mantecabulletin.com/news/government/lathrop-oks-279k-storm-line-repairs/>

Sometimes routine maintenance pays sweeping dividends. Earlier this year City of Lathrop staffers discovered a potential failure in an 84-inch storm drain pipe in the Crossroads Business Park system – which includes the majority of the city’s large industrial warehouse buildings.

8 Bills the Colorado Legislature Passed In 2018 – And 2 That Didn’t Make It

05/10/2018 <http://www.cpr.org/news/story/8-bills-the-colorado-legislature-passed-in-2018-and-2-that-didn-t-make-it>

A bipartisan bill passed this year would beef up Colorado 811, the state’s “call before you dig” system. The hope is that tighter enforcement of existing laws will force companies to keep better track of their underground infrastructure.

Why Congress Should Move on Infrastructure this Summer

05/01/2018 <http://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/385705-why-congress-should-move-on-infrastructure-this-summer>

There is one topic that consistently earns broad bipartisan support, even though the country is bitterly divided over many political issues. Because Americans can see how it benefits everyone, they support large-scale federal investments in infrastructure.

Labor & Workforce**Yet Again, Elon Musk Misses the Mark**

05/17/2018 <https://medium.com/@parismarx/yet-again-elon-musk-misses-the-mark-fd032069ad7e>

The shocking truth is that the cost of bricks — this might be hard to believe — isn’t a leading factor (or even a minor one) driving high housing prices. When considering housing in California, where Musk is currently tunneling, the costs of construction labor and land have a far greater impact than the price of building supplies, and bricks tend to increase the cost of labor because they take more time to assemble.

A Concrete Advantage

05/04/2018 <http://mtnsunews.com/research-a-concrete-advantage/>

As the first Concrete Industry Management degree program in the country, and still one of a select few, CIM has a long history of using research to help TDOT keep our state’s roads and bridges among the best in the nation.

Materials

Bendable Concrete, with a Design Inspired by Seashells, Can Make US Infrastructure Safer and More Durable

05/25/2018 <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Bendable-concrete-with-a-design-inspired-by-12943182.php>

Spring construction season is underway, and many tons of concrete will be used in the coming months. Unfortunately, concrete is a brittle material: Placed under stress, it cannot bend very far before it fractures. Some pavements that are being poured now will crack within a few years and require expensive repairs. New concrete will be mixed, and the cycle will start again.

Concrete Mix Concerns

05/22/2018 <http://www.pahomepage.com/news/concrete-mix-concerns/1192880611>

Some of the concrete is showing signs of deterioration in projects that are less than a year old, so what is going on?

Coal Ash Contains Lead, Arsenic and Mercury — and It's Mostly Unregulated

5/19/2018 https://www.salon.com/2018/05/19/coal-ash-contains-lead-arsenic-and-mercury-and-it-is-mostly-unregulated_partner/

Some of this can be beneficially reused — instead of putting it in a landfill or just storing it near power plants, we can use it in concrete or as filler in things like roads and embankments. Using ash in concrete, for example, locks in the heavy metals and makes the concrete stronger. The fact that it can be used productively, though, is what has held the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) back from labeling it as a hazardous waste.

After the Dust from the Joppa Dispute Settles, Growing Dallas Will Still Need Concrete

5/14/2018 <http://www.dallasobserver.com/news/dallas-need-for-concrete-collides-with-worries-about-environment-and-justice-in-poor-neighborhoods-10677802>

But the question of whether and where to build more concrete operations isn't closed — not for Joppa or for the rest of southern Dallas. Whether near Joppa or elsewhere, concrete plants are headed for the area.

Pipe Survival in a Hostile Environment

5/08/2018 <https://www.wwdmag.com/webinar/pipe-survival-hostile-environment>

The choice of pipe material is vital to the success of any water project, whether it be a water main, a sewer pipe or part of a drainage project. Every project type poses a unique challenge for the design engineer, whose job it is to choose the right pipe material for the job. **This webinar features a team of experts from ACPPA member Thompson Pipe Group.**

Safety**Storm Water Complicates Rescue of Worker Injured by Pipe**

05/22/2018 <http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180522/storm-water-complicates-rescue-of-worker-injured-by-pipe>

A construction worker who was injured when a pipe slipped Tuesday afternoon tumbled into a water outflow channel that leads to Sarasota Bay. He was pulled to safety by fast-working Sarasota County firefighters.

Worker Trapped in Pipe Near Rio Vista: Report

05/21/2018 <https://patch.com/california/suisuncity/s/gff5g/worker-trapped-pipe-near-rio-vista-report>

A rescue operation was reportedly underway Monday in Solano County to free a construction worker from a pipe. Emergency personnel responded to the incident in the area of state Highways 160 and 12 near Rio Vista at about 1 p.m., according to at least one news report.

REGULATORY RESULTS**Water Infrastructure****Environmental Protection Agency | Notice | Extension of the Application Deadline Date for Credit Assistance Under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Program**

05/30/2018 <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-05-30/pdf/2018-11577.pdf>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) extends the deadline to submit a letter of interest (LOI) from prospective borrowers seeking credit assistance from EPA. EPA takes this action to allow more time for the preparation and submission of LOIs by prospective borrowers.

Environmental Protection Agency | Notice | The National Drinking Water Advisory Council: Request for Nominations

05/02/2018 <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-05-02/pdf/2018-09204.pdf>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites nominations of qualified candidates to be considered for a three-year appointment to the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC or Council). The 15-member Council was established by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) to provide practical and independent advice, consultation, and recommendations to the EPA Administrator on the activities, functions, policies, and regulations required by the SDWA.

LEGISLATIVE RESULTS**Cement****H.R. 5745 | Introduced by Rep. Veasey, Marc (D-Texas) | Fossil Energy Research and Development Act of 2018**05/10/2018 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5745>

To amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to direct Federal research in fossil energy and to promote the development and demonstration of environmentally responsible coal and natural gas technologies, and for other purposes.

Water Infrastructure**S. 2800 | Introduced by Sen. Barrasso, John (R-Wyo.) | America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018**05/08/2018 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2800>

To provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

H.R. 8 | Introduced by Rep. Shuster, Bill (R-Pa.) | America's Water Infrastructure Act of 201805/18/2018 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/8>

To provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

Water Supply**H.R. 5895 | Introduced by Rep. Simpson, Michael (R-Idaho) | Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019**05/21/2018 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5895>

Making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes.

S. 2865 | Introduced by Sen. Baldwin, Tammy (D-Wis.) | Made in America Act of 201805/16/2018 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2865>

To ensure that certain materials used in carrying out Federal infrastructure aid programs are made in the United States, and for other purposes.

