



COMMITTEE ON

# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

SAM GRAVES, REPUBLICAN LEADER

## Fact Sheet: H.R. 7575 - The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020

WRDA – the *Water Resources Development Act of 2020* (H.R. 7575) – is bipartisan legislation that includes projects of national, regional, and local significance that strengthen our global competitiveness, grow the economy, move goods throughout the country, protect communities, and create jobs. H.R. 7575, as amended, passed the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure by voice vote on July 15, 2020.

Specifically, WRDA authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Civil Works Program. Under this program, the Corps carries out projects to improve the Nation’s ports and harbors, inland waterway navigation, flood and storm protection, and other segments of water resources infrastructure. WRDA also provides important policy reforms related to the Corps.

In 2014, under Republican leadership, Congress reestablished the regular consideration of WRDA, and since then Congress has signed a bill into law every two years. WRDA 2020 maintains the regular consideration of this important infrastructure legislation without ceding Congress’s authority to the Executive Branch, includes priorities provided by Republican Members in the House, and demonstrates that the only path forward to addressing our infrastructure is through bipartisan partnership, not partisanship.

### Why WRDA Works:

- Communities throughout the country rely on WRDA-authorized projects and investments in water resource infrastructure. Ports get products into the supply chain, inland waterways move the commodities that communities produce, and flood protection infrastructure safeguards homes and businesses.
- WRDA 2020 authorizes 38 projects that have been thoroughly reviewed by the Corps and have culminated in a final report to Congress with approval by the Chief of Engineers. In addition, WRDA authorizes 35 feasibility studies for locally proposed projects.
- WRDA 2020 is fiscally responsible. The cost of project authorizations in H.R. 7575 is offset by deauthorizations of previous projects that are out of date or no longer necessary.

### **WRDA Policy Reforms:**

- **Flood Control & Resiliency:** Many American communities have been devastated by flooding in recent years, and many continue recovery efforts in the face of future flood threats. WRDA 2020 helps repair and prevent flooding damage by -
  - Streamlining flood risk reduction projects – including projects for repetitive loss communities.
  - Providing local communities with the tools to build more resilient infrastructure after disasters, rather than simply building back to previous conditions.
  - Supporting rural communities by providing additional resources to address flood risks.
  - Authorizing studies to expedite flood control solutions for many regions of the country, including the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.
- **Focus on Rural America:** Rural communities often have greater difficulty meeting funding and technical challenges associated with water resources infrastructure improvements. WRDA 2020 helps these disadvantaged areas by:
  - Improving the Corps' calculation of costs and benefits and gives the Corps additional flexibility to successfully rescope studies for economically disadvantaged and rural communities.
  - Ensuring opportunities for the Corps to provide needed projects and studies to economically disadvantaged and rural communities.
- **Faster Project Completion:** The Inland Waterways System, consisting of 12,000 miles of commercially navigable channels and approximately 240 lock sites, is critical to cost-effectively moving commodities and bulk goods in the United States (578 million tons in 2017). To expedite inland waterways improvements, WRDA 2020 will:
  - Adjust the cost-share for the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (to 35% Trust Fund and 65% General Fund and for 7 years) to expedite the completion of 2 ongoing projects and commencement of 3 new projects.
  - Provide an additional 5 years of authority to enable local management of authorized construction projects.
- **Addresses Maintenance Backlog:** Important reforms in WRDA 2020 will allow the Corps to more effectively address a backlog of necessary water resources improvements by:
  - Reaffirming the full utilization of Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) resources for the purpose of improving U.S. ports and harbors. This bipartisan policy was also approved by the House under suspension of the rules in October 2019.
  - Providing the Corps new authority to rehabilitate flood control pump stations that have gone beyond their design life and are in critical need of repair.

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