

asbpa

American Shore & Beach Preservation Association

Advocating for healthy coastlines

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February 13, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chair, Energy and Water
Senate Appropriations
Sub-Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chair, Energy and Water
House Appropriations
Sub-Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking, Energy and Water
Senate Appropriations
Sub-Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Ranking, Energy and Water
House Appropriations
Sub-Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Alexander & Kaptur and Ranking Members Feinstein & Simpson:

Since 1926, the American Shore & Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA), a 501(c)3 non-profit, has been dedicated to preserving, protecting and enhancing our coasts by merging science and public policy. Our members are industry, local government officials, academics and residents of coastal districts; we are advocates for healthy coastlines.

ASBPA would like to once again commend you for securing full passage of the FY2019 Energy and Water (E&W) appropriations bill. An on time E&W appropriations bill is critical to maintaining our nation's water and coastal infrastructure. Furthermore, by passing a bill on regular order, you save the government and the American people millions of dollars in planning for continuing resolutions, and agencies can be far more efficient in spending their annual budget knowing what the full budget will be. And finally, as we saw this year, agencies that had appropriations were far less impacted by the government shutdown.

As you look to develop FY2020 E&W appropriations, we cannot encourage you strongly enough to get a bill passed on time.

ASBPA also thanks you for your commitment to funding our nation's coastal infrastructure through appropriations to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Civil Works (USACE-CW), both in regular appropriations and in disaster supplemental appropriations. Maintaining and improving our nation's a) coastal flood risk reduction, b) sediment management, and c) coastal data and research are sound investments. These combine to provide the coastal defenses our nation needs as coastal communities face erosion, rising seas, and increasing storm intensity. We can invest millions in resilience now, or pay billions in recovery later.

As you prepare you FY2020 E&W appropriations package, we ask you to include:

- 1) **\$75 million in USACE-CW construction account for shore protection.**

Coastal shoreline counties contribute \$6.9 trillion to our GDP¹. Coastal habitats including beaches, wetlands, mangroves and estuarine systems are some of the most ecologically productive and economically important on earth². But perhaps most importantly to communities located along a coast, **a healthy coastline provides protection of life and property from the hazards of living by the water** – storm surge, waves, and sea level rise.

Funding for shore protection in recent years has largely come from disaster supplement appropriations, and while this funding is both critical and provided at politically expedient times, funding shore protection as part of regular appropriations allows communities to better maintain their beaches and coastline *before* the storm hits. And so ASBPA would like to see a greater portion of that funding come via regular order. **Please provide \$75 million in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Civil Works (USACE-CW) construction account for shore protection.**

- 2) ***Fund the Beneficial Use of Dredged Material (BUDM) pilot projects (Sec. 1122 of the WRDA 2016/WIIN Act; Sec. 1130 of WRDA 2018): Provide at least \$16 million in whichever line-item the USACE can use it.***

After much delay the USACE finally announced their first ten pilot projects in December 2018. Despite the clear intention of the House and Senate Appropriations committees for the \$8.5 million increase in the FY19 CAP 204 appropriations to be used for this program, USACE has been reluctant to fund the projects. So we encourage your committee to get a clear commitment from USACE on where funding should be placed so that these programs will be funded.

Furthermore, USACE has been reluctant to outline how much the pilot projects would cost in total *and* USACE has refused to announce the additional ten BUDM projects authorized in WRDA 2018 (Sec. 1130) until the first ten are funded. ASBPA believes that the full cost of the first ten projects would be in the ballpark of \$40 million (meaning an additional ~\$32 million beyond what was already appropriated). **We therefore request that you provide at least \$16 million (50% of what's still needed to construct the first ten pilot projects) in FY2020.**

- 3) ***Fund coastal research and data collection, specifically, O&M item, “Coastal Inlet Research Program” at \$7.975 million.***

FY2019 E&W appropriations provided an increase to Coastal Inlet Research program “*to identify engineering frameworks to address coastal resilience needs, to develop adaptive pathways that lead to coastal resilience, measure the coastal forces that lead to infrastructure damage and erosion during extreme storm events, and to improve coupling of terrestrial and coastal models.*” ASBPA believes this investment in science and research to better understand how coastal infrastructure is impacted by coastal forces and how coastal infrastructure can be more resilient is one of the most sensible and prudent investments made by Congress. While the return on investment may be years out, we are confident the advances in coastal resilience generated by this funding will reduce coastal communities’ and the federal government’s budgets in the coming years as sea level rise and coastal storms become increasingly destructive. **Please continue to provide \$7.975 million for the “Coastal Inlet Research Program.”**

¹ NOAA, State of the Coast, 2012. <http://stateofthecoast.noaa.gov/>

² Barbier, Et al, “The value of estuarine and coastal ecosystem services”, Ecological Monographs, 2011. <http://www.esajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1890/10-1510.1>

4) Please maintain FY19 funding levels or increase funding for:

- a. Regional Sediment Management
- b. National Coastal Mapping Program
- c. Coastal Ocean Data System
- d. Coastal Field Data Collection
- e. CAP 204 (BUDM)
- f. CAP 103 (Shore Protection)
- g. CAP 206 (Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration)

The National Coastal Mapping Program, Coastal Ocean Data System and Coastal Field Data Collection combined came to under \$20 million in FY19, but are major investments in coastal data collection and analysis, which is relied on by communities and industry.

The Continuing Authorities Programs, CAP 204 (BUDM), CAP 103 (Shore Protection), and CAP 206 (Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration) are similarly low-budget, and the individual projects they fund are small compared to the federally authorized projects with their own budget line-item. Nevertheless, coastal communities rely on these projects to support their flood risk management and ecological restoration efforts, making them incredibly valuable at the community level.

5) Fund the studies authorized in WRDA 2018 (S. 3021):

- a. GAO Study on Benefit-Cost Analysis Reforms (Sec. 1204)
- b. Study on Economic and Budgetary Analyses (Sec. 1103)
- c. Study of The Future of The United States Army Corps Of Engineers (Sec. 1102)

In developing the 2018 Water Resource Development Act, Congressional authorizing committees considered some systemic changes to USACE budgeting and even to the role and purpose of USACE. But rather than making wholesale changes, Congress chose to authorize major studies the National Academies of Science (NAS) and the General Accountability Office (GAO) that explore how major changes could work. To better shape the future of USACE (and therefore coastal infrastructure and coastal resilience) we ask you fund these studies so future WRDAs can make the appropriate changes to USACE budgeting and operations.

ASBPA is grateful to your sub-committees and Congress for making sure the critical missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in particular that of coastal flood risk reduction, shore protection, and coastal research, are funded, even when the administration does not see fit to support them. Of course, these are only a few small pieces of a much larger investment needed in preparing our coastal communities for increasingly intense and frequent coastal storms and hazards on top of increasing rates of sea level rise. Improving the resilience of coastal communities will take coordination across multiple federal agencies working together with state and local authorities. It will also take a large scale dedicated investment in coastal infrastructure. However a good first step in protecting coastal communities is ensuring shore protection, regional sediment management, and coastal data acquisition are appropriately funded.

Sincerely,



Derek Brockbank
Executive Director

CC: Sens. Richard Shelby, Patrick Leahy; Reps. Nita Lowey, Kay Granger *Chairs & Ranking Members, Appropriations Committees*