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Water Resources Development Act of 2020

On December 21, 2020, the House of Representatives passed the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA 2020) as part of end of year Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260).

The complete text of WRDA 2020 part of this law can be found at this link: [WRDA 2020 Text](#)

Some of the important provisions of WRDA 2020 include:

- **Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Surplus.** Section 101 WRDA 2020 authorizes the spending down of the approximately \$9.3 billion balance in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to address the backlog in federal navigation maintenance projects throughout the United States.
- **Authorization of Appropriations.** Section 102 authorizes appropriations for the operation and maintenance costs of harbors and inland harbors including:
 - Not less than 15% for emerging harbor projects
 - Not less than 13% for projects located within the Great Lakes Navigation System
 - 12% for donor ports and energy transfer ports
 - Not less than 17% for commercial strategic ports.
- **Inland Waterways Projects.** The bill modifies the cost share for construction or major rehabilitation of a project on the inland waters to 65% from the general fund of the U.S. Treasury and 35% from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF). (Sec. 109)
- **Resiliency Planning.** The bill emphasizes the need to provide technical assistance to non-Federal interests for greater resiliency planning and directs the Corps to prioritize resiliency planning assistance to economically disadvantaged communities and communities subject to repetitive flooding. (Sec. 111)
- **Acceptance of Funds for Harbor Dredging.** This section allows the Corps to accept and expend funds contributed by a State or other non-Federal interest to dredge or provide technical assistance for planning and design of activities in a non-Federal waterway.
- **Feasibility Studies.** Section 201 authorizes the Corps to conduct feasibility studies for 27 projects for water resources development and conservation including –
 - The Chicago Area Waterways System
 - The Lower Missouri River in Kansas
 - The Lower Columbia River Basin in Oregon & Washington
 - The City of Charleston, South Carolina
 - Houston-Galveston, Texas
 - Port Arthur, Texas
 - Virginia Beach and vicinity.

- **Expedited Completions.** Section 202 directs the Corps to expedite the completion of 65 feasibility studies currently underway and other project reports, assessments, and studies. This includes projects such as:
 - Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway
 - Del Mar Bluffs in San Diego County, California
 - A navigation project from San Francisco Bay to Stockton, California
 - A project to deepen Gulfport Harbor, Mississippi
 - A project for navigation in Seattle Harbor, Washington
 - A project for navigation in Tacoma Harbor, Washington
 - A project for navigation in Milwaukee Harbor, Wisconsin
- **Expedited Modifications of Existing Feasibility Studies.** Section 203 modifies 4 existing feasibility studies including:
 - The study for flood risk reduction on the ocean shoreline of San Mateo, San Francisco, and Marin Counties, California.
 - The study for flood and storm damage reduction for New York and New Jersey Harbor.
- **Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study.** Section 211 directs the Corps to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Great Lakes System and make recommendations to respond to changing hydrologic and climatic conditions in the region.
- **Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study.** Section 213 requires the Corps to submit a report to Congress on the comprehensive study of the Lower Mississippi River Basing and make recommendations for the comprehensive management of the Basin.
- **Portsmouth Harbor, New Hampshire.** Section 217 requires the Corps to expedite activities to address shoaling impacts at the Rye Harbor, New Hampshire.
- **Project Authorizations.** Section 401 authorizes 46 water resources projects for which reports have been submitted to Congress. These include:
 - New York and New Jersey Harbor Anchorages. (Total cost: \$26 million)
 - Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project (Total cost: \$885.6 million)
 - Matagorda Ship Channel Improvement (Total cost: \$220.6 million)
 - Corpus Christi Ship Channel Deepening and Widening (Total cost \$681.6 million)