



## Fine Day For Funding

A tow exits the east lock of the Colorado River Lock system near Matagorda, Texas.



It's always a great day when funding increases, and in June, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works' inland waterways Construction Account essentially quintupled, and the overall Civil Works budget tripled compared to the president's budget that was released in February.

On June 13, the House Appropriations Committee approved, by a party line vote of 30 to 21, FY21 funding for Energy and Water Development (E&WD) that funds the Corps.

Overall proposed House funding for the Corps in FY21 is \$7.63 billion, a decrease of \$21 million below FY20's record-setting appropriated level, but \$1.7 billion above the president's FY21 budget request.

The House bill also provided for seven new study starts and seven new construction projects to be selected by the administration, one of which is slated for inland waterways lock and dam modernization.

The Corps' Investigations Account funding was \$151 million, which is equal to the FY20 enacted level and \$48 million above the FY21 request.

Funding for the Construction Account was \$2.62 billion, a decrease of \$61 million below FY20's level, but \$447 million above FY21's request.

The Inland Waterways Trust Fund funding level was \$90 million for a total of at least \$180 million in funding for construction and major rehabilitation of inland waterways projects, with the final program level dependent on project-specific allocations to be made by the Corps.

Funding for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) was \$3.84 billion, an increase of \$48

million above FY20 and \$1.8 billion above the administration request.

Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) projects received \$1.68 billion, \$50 million above the FY20 level and an increase of \$665 million above the administration's request. This represents 92% of estimated HMTF revenue, an increase of 9% above the target set by the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014.

The House bill provided the Corps an additional \$17 billion in emergency funding to accelerate work on projects. Of the additional \$17 billion, the Construction account received \$10 billion to accelerate projects across all Corps mission areas, at least \$3 billion of which is for inland waterways projects. The bill also provided an additional \$5 billion in O&M emergency funding.

Of the House funding for FY21, Waterways Council Inc. (WCI) offered its thanks to the House Appropriations Committee, and the Energy & Water Development Subcommittee, for their work in passing a FY21 appropriations bill that funds the Corps' Civil Works mission. The FY21 bill appropriates an amount close to the record-level funding provided to the Corps' Civil Works mission for FY20 and an additional \$17 billion in emergency infrastructure funding to significantly advance the completion of important water resources projects. A new start for the inland waterways in FY21 was also welcome news and helps to further modernize this critical transportation system.

### WRDA 2020 Voted Out

Also, during the same week, the House

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) voted the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA 2020) favorably out of Committee.

Section 108 of the House T&I bill (H.R. 7575) addresses WCI's top WRDA priority to adjust the cost-share for construction and major rehabilitation of inland waterways projects. The bill modifies the inland waterways project cost-share to 65% from the general fund of the Treasury/35% from Inland Waterways Trust Fund (from 50%/50%).

The House T&I Committee's WRDA bill's cost-share adjustment sunsets at the end of Fiscal Year 2027 with a provision that any project that begins construction within this timeframe will carry the 65%/35% cost-share all the way through to the end of its construction.

The bill also authorizes the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway, Brazos River Floodgates, and Colorado River Locks.

WCI is grateful to the House T&I Committee for continuing the biennial process of WRDA. This bill is a step in the right direction for inland waterways infrastructure by adjusting the cost-share to 65%/35% for seven years. We look forward to working with the Committee as this bill proceeds to the House floor and then to Conference.

In early May, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee marked up and passed its WRDA bill, known as America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020, which includes the Committee's version of the WRDA bill. The Senate's version included a permanent cost-share adjustment for construction and major rehabilitation projects at /65% General Revenue/35% IWTF with no sunset provision. At press time, no date had been set on floor time for the Senate WRDA bill.

Congress is producing good outcomes for the Corps of Engineers, whose important work will continue to prove essential as the nation's economy recovers from COVID-19.



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