



### Federal Overview - WRRDA

According to a U.S. Senate Fact Sheet the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2013 - promotes investment in the nation's critical water resources infrastructure, accelerates project delivery, and reforms the implementation of Corps of Engineers projects.

### Project Authorization

This legislation authorizes projects with completed Chief of Engineers reports that have been referred to Congress by

the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works by the date of enactment. Currently, this represents 18 projects that address all of the major mission areas of the Corps of Engineers

including flood risk management, navigation, hurricane and storm damage risk reduction, and environmental restoration. The average annual benefits of the flood and storm risk management reduction projects alone exceed \$690.3 million.

### Project Delivery Reforms

The legislation contains important reforms to increase flexibility for non-Federal sponsors of Corps projects and accelerate project delivery. These include codifying a Corps initiative to finish new feasibility studies in less than three years, improving the environmental review process while maintaining environmental protections, and creating two pilot programs to expand the local role in project implementation. The bill also establishes a new program to

promote levee safety and improves inland waterways project delivery.

### Lower Santa Cruz River Alliance

One project that should benefit from a streamlined process is the Lower Santa Cruz River Watershed. Encompassing thousands of square miles, the watershed runs through western and southern Pinal County, impacting some of Arizona's fastest growing communities. AZAGC supports the efforts of the Lower Santa Cruz River Alliance which is

working to raise awareness and secure a comprehensive regional flood control solution for the Lower Santa Cruz River Watershed

### Harbor

#### Maintenance

The legislation addresses the growing surplus of funds in the

Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund by ensuring all revenues will be spent for port maintenance without impacting other important Corps of Engineers projects.

### Innovative Financing

The legislation establishes a 5-year innovative project financing pilot program, which is modeled on the successful TIFIA program. This new pilot program will provide loans and loan guarantees for important flood control, water supply, and wastewater projects.

### Project De-authorizations

The legislation includes a provision that requires the Corps to provide Congress with a complete list of all uncompleted, authorized projects and creates a Commission to identify projects for de-authorization. The Commission will hold public hearings

and solicit comments to make final recommendations to Congress. Congress will have the opportunity to disapprove of the de-authorizations proposed by the Commission.

### WRDA Status

The House passed its WRDA bill in October, 2013 by an overwhelming 417-3 vote. The Senate also passed its version of the bill in May, 2013 on an equally impressive, bipartisan 83-14 vote. During their conference meeting, the only legislative issue of some controversy was the environmental streamlining provisions. Reports indicate that final passage on a WRDA bill could come as early as mid-December, 2013.

### AGC Position

AGC of America would like congress to support and pass WRRDA. It provides;

- ✓ An adequate and efficient project authorization process;
- ✓ Spending harbor maintenance tax revenues on harbor maintenance, addressing the Olmsted Locks and Dam project in a way that allows other necessary inland waterways projects to proceed;
- ✓ Environmental streamlining and project delivery acceleration through limiting the time to file lawsuits on projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and setting firm deadlines for pre-construction project studies; and,
- ✓ Innovative financing methods—including a public private partnership pilot program and Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Authority—that supplement, not replace, traditional government funding for water resources infrastructure.

**Based on identified needs, annual spending patterns projected by agencies, and trends extended from recent years, cumulative funding gaps for inland waterways and marine ports is estimated at almost \$16 billion through 2020, and grows to \$46 billion through 2040.**

Source: ASCE's - Failure to Act The economic impact Of current Investment Trends in Airports, Inland Waterways, and Marine Ports Infrastructure