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SECTION 7001 PORTAL NOW OPEN

The [Section 7001](#) process is the process by which non-federal interests can submit water resources projects to the Corps for recommendation to Congress for authorization. If your community has been considering a water resources project but needs federal support, this is the opportunity for the Corps to consider it. If you're not sure if your project is worth submitting, please reach out and we can help you make that determination.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES \$123 MILLION FOR COASTAL HABITAT RESTORATION

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced [\\$123 million](#) for state and territorial coastal management programs and national estuarine research reserves to support habitat restoration and conservation. Within this investment, \$36 million will be designated for projects being carried out in partnership with or directly by Tribes and Native Hawaiians, including reacquisitions and restoration of ecological and culturally significant ancestral lands. This investment will help to protect critical resources for coastal habitat restoration, create new jobs, and boost resilience to extreme weather events across our nation's coastal communities.

REP. TOM COLE TAKES THE APPROPRIATIONS GAVEL

It's that time of year again on Capitol Hill — budget season. It hasn't been long since Congress passed two contentious FY24 minibus spending packages, but the House and Senate are already working on FY25 spending bills and Federal Agency officials are marching in and out of committee hearing rooms to defend their budgetary requests.

The House Appropriations Committee, the gatekeeper and overseer of government spending which includes earmarks (or Congressionally Directed Spending), has undergone a recent shake-up. Chairwoman Kay Granger [R-TX-12] has stepped down as Chair of the whole committee while her tenure in Congress winds down. Taking the reins is veteran Rules Committee Chairman and noted fiscal hawk, Tom Cole [R-OK-4].

Since taking the lead, Cole has appointed his team of 12 *Cardinals* (subcommittee chairs). This is just one of two important developments in that these 12 figures oversee each spending bill within their subcommittee's jurisdiction. For example, the Homeland Subcommittee, where FEMA funding resides, is waving goodbye to Representative Dave Joyce [R-OH] and is welcoming Representative Mark Amodei [R-NV-02].

On the other hand, in the world of earmarks, Rep. Cole has made changes to accounts and eligibility requirements, announcing in his "*Dear Colleague*" to members across the House that, "one notable change is that non-profits are no longer eligible for Community Project Funding in the Economic Development Initiative (EDI) account."

With new leadership at the wheel and a contentious season in the rearview, this budget season is bound to be an exciting one to watch. As always, we'll keep a vigilant eye on Congress' actions throughout their FY25 Budgetary review process.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES \$3B FOR LEAD REMOVAL

Earlier this month, the Biden Administration [announced](#) \$3 billion in funding available through the Investing in America Agenda to replace toxic lead pipes. Lead pipes have been a hot button issue that has plagued communities across the United States for decades. This investment, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is part of the historic \$15 billion in dedicated funding for lead pipe replacement provided by the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

As an example, states like New Jersey have already taken the initiative to rid the Garden State of harmful public water infrastructure. In the summer of 2021, Governor Murphy [signed](#) into law a package of bills addressing the issue of lead exposure in drinking water. This state has since implemented regulations that require the municipalities and localities throughout the Garden State to take inventory of and replace existing lead pipelines.

OFFSHORE WIND OUTLOOK IS NOT GETTING ROSIER

Opinions on renewable energy are a mixed bag across the US, but even fossil fuel-heavy states like Texas are enjoying the benefits of cheap [onshore](#) wind and solar power. But recently, Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, [wrote](#) to President Biden that she "will never allow the federal government to endanger the people of Texas and [the] state's beautiful wildlife with untested, unproven, and ineffective technology when reliable, clean, and safe energy is already available." She vowed not to allow any transmission cables to come ashore in the state's jurisdiction, which extends out 9 miles, meaning that although offshore wind could be developed in federal lease areas offshore of Texas, transmission cables would have to be routed much farther through Louisiana, Mississippi, or Alabama.

It's important to note that it is not just Red states like Texas and Florida that are opposed, it is the industries that rely on ocean-economies that have serious issues with offshore wind, which encompass the economic, environmental, and cultural issues raised before in WaterLog. As much as the media likes to cast opinions as Red or Blue, opposition has continued to grow against offshore wind even in Democratic-led states like Oregon where both US Senators (D), the state's governor (D), and several House members (D) sent a joint [letter](#) raising concerns with offshore wind. A year later, those concerns still persist. Ocean-economy communities throughout the nation have said NO to

offshore wind, despite a cavalier approach from governors and elected officials in the US House and Senate working to implement offshore wind at any cost (literally).

What we are seeing is a massive shift against offshore wind – far greater than the Northeast communities that originally spoke up in opposition. Opposition now covers all coasts, including the Great Lakes. Investors are becoming increasingly worried about the potential returns of offshore wind projects simply because the costs are too high. Whether due to interest rates or supply chain issues, [roughly 60%](#) of offshore wind contracts have been abandoned by developers, whose financial forecasts were so bad they opted instead to pay tens of millions of dollars in fines to cancel their contracts. States have rushed to fill the void to keep their political promises, but few have been successful thus far.

An [article](#) in the Wall Street Journal estimated that at least 15 nuclear power plants would be required to meet the electricity demand from Artificial Intelligence alone. That does not include cryptocurrency mining or the new data centers that are being brought online. A new report out this week determined that wind wakes from dense offshore wind farms could reduce output by up to 38%. With a low-capacity factor already for offshore wind (40%), a 38% decline would result in a final capacity factor of roughly 26%. Offshore wind is the most expensive source of technology available, and with these metrics, it's no wonder investors are heading for the exit and ratepayers are pounding the table.

NORTH WILDWOOD BEACHES FIND RELIEF FOR THE SUMMER SEASON

The City of North Wildwood, NJ, received federal funding for a federal beach nourishment project after Superstorm Sandy, but it remains the only developed coastline in the state that has yet to receive a federal- or state-funded grain of sand. That is about to change as a dredge is expected to be onsite later this month to begin pumping \$10 million worth of sand onto North Wildwood's beaches. The project is expected to take 15 weeks, but the City hopes it will be complete by July 4th. The City is expecting to receive roughly 330,000 cubic yards of sand but may contribute additional funding to place a greater quantity of sand since it has at least 2 summers to get through before the federal project will be constructed.

Funding for beach nourishment projects in the State of New Jersey typically comes from its Shore Protection Fund, which is controlled by the Department of Environmental Protection. The State's policy requires that its shore protection funds be matched by federal funding, but in a surprise move, the State's Department of Transportation has committed to a temporary project to provide relief until the federal project is ready for construction, removing that policy requirement. The project will dredge sand from Hereford Inlet, which is eligible for use so long as the funding is non-federal.

SURFERS, RESIDENTS, FIGHT ROCK REVETMENT PLANNED TO PROTECT RAILROAD IN SAN CLEMENTE

A campaign by residents and surfers to stop the placement of \$100M+ of rocks along the railroad even reached the masses on the popular surf forecasting app *Surfline*, with all SoCal surf reports appended with a link to "Sign the Petition to Stop Hard-Armoring Plans for San Clemente's Coastline. Restore Our Beaches With Sand." The news has percolated to other popular surf magazines and has been shared by professional surfers on social media.

This campaign places the railroad authority OCTA (Orange County Transit Authority) in a unique position where it faces significant backlash for a practice it has relied on for decades. Rocks and other hard structures along the coastline are a reliable means of protection from waves, but they are known to severely exacerbate erosion in all directions.



Cottons Point, then and now. Photos: Hugh Berenger

Note, this loss of beach is the result of severe erosion, not sea level rise, which rises on average just 3.2 millimeters per year in CA. Our firm Warwick Group is used to taking the heat from those against beach nourishment (they're wrong), but it's great to see that those who use the beach the most often understand the importance of beach nourishment and its benefits over hard armoring.

IMPROVED BUILDING CODES DEMAND NEW CATEGORY 6 RATING FOR HURRICANES

When the Saffir-Simpson hurricane rating scale was created, a Category 5 hurricane was envisioned as a biblical storm where no structure could survive. But today's building codes have improved so much that many new structures can withstand 157mph sustained winds, prompting scientists to theorize about adding a 6th category to account for a new strength of unprecedented storms. Recent storm observations have shown increased strength due to warmer waters, which could be linked to climate change. Category 6 would represent any tropical cyclone with sustained winds of at least 192mph, which 5 storms have surpassed since 2013. Have you ever been to a NASCAR race to see what 192mph looks and feels like?

STATUS OF COASTAL BILLS IN CONGRESS

[Click here](#) for a listing of all coastal-related bills in the 118th Congress.

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