



PUBLIC POLICY

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA)

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge Congress to **SUPPORT** bi-annual passage of the Water Resources Development Act that authorizes U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects and policies that often have state-wide impacts to Florida, including Everglades restoration, port and inlet construction, and beach nourishment projects.

Urge Congress to **SUPPORT** restoration of congressionally directed spending.

BACKGROUND:

WRDA legislation is critical for addressing the nation's water infrastructure needs, which are vital to the safety, environmental protection, and economic development of state and local economies.

WRDA legislation authorizes various water resources studies, projects, and programs that are undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). WRDA legislation does not appropriate funds for the activities authorized in the bill; rather, funding for WRDA-authorized projects is generally appropriated in Congress' annual Energy and Water appropriations bill. Congress generally aims to pass a WRDA bill, which authorizes federal navigation, flood control and protection, water supply, ecosystem restoration, and other types of water projects, every two years; however, for a period prior to 2014, only one WRDA bill passed, in 2007. Delaying WRDA can lead to critical infrastructure projects being postponed. Congress passed WRDA bills in 2014, 2016, and 2018, signaling a return, at least for the time being, to the recurring two-year WRDA cycle.

The most recent WRDA, America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, authorized \$6.1 billion for Corps studies and projects and included \$4.4 billion for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund program. Congress began holding hearings on 2020 WRDA legislation over the summer, although draft legislation has not yet been released.

FLORIDA IMPACT:

Notably for Florida, the 2018 WRDA legislation authorized Florida projects relating to Everglades restoration, beach nourishment, flood control, navigation, and environmental protection. Specifically, the legislation included authorization for the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Southern Storage Reservoir to reduce discharges from Lake Okeechobee, as well as expedited the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule to coincide with the completion of the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation.

