

Factsheet: America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018

On October 10, 2018, the U.S. Senate passed the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, which follows the U.S. House of Representative's approval of the legislation on September 13, 2018. The bill includes several of the recreational boating industry's top water infrastructure priorities and now heads to President Trump for his signature.

Full text of the bill is available here: <https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20180910/S3021-2.pdf>

Summary of the Industry's Priorities in the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018

Combatting Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

- Provides guidance on funding, operation, and maintenance for the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project near Joliet, Illinois – a key effort for the preventing the spread of Asian carp.
- Allocates \$110 million for watercraft inspection stations to prevent the spread of AIS across the Columbia River Basin, Upper Missouri River Basin, the Upper Colorado River Basin, and the South Platte and Arizona River Basins.
- Requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) to research and provide recommendations to Congress on managing and eradicating AIS.

Dredging Efforts

- Authorizes \$3.7 billion in funding for dredging, flood risk management, and storm damage reduction projects throughout the country – increases to \$5.6 billion when non-federal funds are included.
- Creates a pilot program for awarding dredging contracts across geographic regions rather than on a project-by-project basis.
 - New initiative will increase the number of dredging projects annually.

Everglades Restoration

- Authorizes the Everglades Agricultural Area project to better protect the Florida everglades and water quality in central and south Florida.
 - This project that will help prevent toxic discharges from Lake Okeechobee that flow into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries.

Mitigating Current and Future Harmful Algae Bloom Outbreaks

- Authorizes the Corps to research, develop, and implement new technologies that reduce the occurrence of harmful algal blooms.
 - The Everglades Agricultural Area project will also help prevent harmful algae blooms.

Reforming U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Processes

- Requires the Corps to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to improve how water resources development projects are prioritized.
 - This could result in further consideration of recreational boating's economic importance when determining which projects should proceed.
- Streamlines the approval process for local water infrastructure initiatives that require federal authorization.

- Allows local communities to have more input in which projects receive funding.
- Incentivizes and allows non-government funding to expedite the evaluation and approval of a public project or activity.
- Requires the Corps to submit a report to Congress on actions taken to remove obstructions from federal channels, ensuring boaters have unrestricted access to waterways.

Relevant Reporting Requirements

- Requires the government to consider recreational boating's economic impact when making funding determinations for the certain projects.
- Authorizes the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, which will be a first of a kind effort to create a coordinated strategy to manage the water infrastructure needs of the Great Lakes System.
 - This study will help pinpoint areas in the Great Lakes that require significant infrastructure and other coastal projects.