



Oppose Fiscally Irresponsible Amendments to S. 601, Water Resources Development Act of 2013

May 13, 2013

Dear Senator,

Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS) urges you to vote no on S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act of 2013. This bill contains too many misguided and costly provisions that are likely to exacerbate problems facing our nation's water infrastructure.

Through targeted parochial provisions, expansion of federal financial responsibility into traditionally non-federal areas, and explicit or implicit changes to long-established fiscally responsible cost sharing rules, this legislation will increase federal spending on our nation's waterways without a corresponding guarantee of improved returns on these investments. Instead this bill, and a number of proposed amendments, is likely to add to the Corps of Engineers' estimated \$60 billion project backlog while doing little to bring project prioritization in federal spending. In addition efforts to delay needed reforms to the National Flood Insurance Program or to undercut Super Storm Sandy recovery efforts must be rejected.

TCS urges you to support the following fiscally responsible amendments:

- **Coburn-Flake-McCain #814** – Reduces federal subsidies for ongoing beach renourishment
- **Coburn-McCain-Flake #815** – Eliminates automatic extension of 50-year old beach nourishment projects
- **Coburn-McCaskill-McCain #816** – Makes all projects eligible for review by deauthorization commission
- **Sessions #818** – Amends the bill's irresponsible project authorization section with a Sense of Congress that Congressional abdication of authority is not a proper response to the inability to earmark
- **Udall (NM)-Cardin-Heinrich-Cowan #851** – Delays study acceleration reforms until the Corps certifies the project backlog is under control (at less than \$20 billion)
- **Shaheen-Flake #864** – Tightens automatic deauthorization program, and ties 5% of Chief of Engineers general expenses to the submittal of the deauthorization list
- **Shaheen #865** – Maintains fiscally responsible cost-share for port operations and maintenance

TCS urges you to oppose the following amendments:

Amendments Creating Ambiguous Future Authorizations after enactment of the bill

- **Graham-Scott #842** – Authorizes navigation projects until Sep. 30, 2017. Requires equal non-federal/federal share for cost (instead of typical 65% federal/35% non-federal) but non-federal sponsor eligible for reimbursement
- **Graham-Scott #843** – Same as 842 but for all projects (not just navigation)
- **Graham-Scott #844** – Authorizes projects through 2017 for projects with a Chief's report and included in the President's "We Can't Wait" initiative from 2012. This is specifically targeted at the ports of Charleston, Jacksonville, Miami, and Savannah
- **Graham-Scott #845** – Same as 842 without cost-sharing change
- **Udall (NM)-Graham-Heinrich-Brown #852** – Extends automatic project authorizations until December 31, 2016

- **Brown-Graham-Udall (NM)-Heinrich #856** – same as 852

Irresponsible Approaches to Inland Waterways and Ports

- **Casey #854** – Increases inland waterway fuel tax to 29 cents – This is a failed attempt to deal with the underlying trust fund problems and is a stalking horse for later cost sharing changes sought by Senator Casey and the barge industry.
- **Levin-Schumer-Baldwin-Stabenow #857** – Great Lakes-specific provision to say all parts of the Great lakes (for O&M) are as important as any other and to consider the whole system as one piece including for tonnage measurement
- **Wyden-Merkley #870** – Creates a surplus dredging funding set aside for low use and medium use ports
- **Kaine-Warner #879** – Reduces the amount of containers unloaded from or loaded on to vessels in calendar year 2011 (to be eligible as a donor port) from 2,000,000 containers to 1,850,000
- **Coons #885** – Expands the extra dredging activities (berths, confined disposal) for donor ports to any state, with priority given to donor ports

Expansion of Federal Responsibility

- **Boozman #871** – Expands innovative financing section to water supply projects

Flood Insurance/ Sandy (oppose)

- **Landrieu-Vitter #802** – Would inappropriately delay flood insurance premium changes as mandated by Biggert Waters flood insurance reform bill
- **Menendez #848** - Delays Biggert Waters flood insurance reform in NY/NJ until 1 year after the Hazard Mitigation Funds provided in Sandy Supplemental are expended
- **Reid-Lautenberg-Menendez-Schumer #883** – Makes all construction projects funded under Sandy Supplemental eligible for 100% federal funding. Eliminating cost share provisions for Sandy-related projects means fewer projects will be constructed.
- **Landrieu-Vitter-Schumer #887** – Delay flood insurance rate changes for 5 years. This would run the clock out on positive reforms to the flood insurance program
- **Landrieu-Vitter-Schumer-Lautenberg #888** – Same as #887

Taxpayers for Common Sense strongly opposes S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act of 2013. The legislation cedes too much power to the Executive Branch and will cost far more than the Congressional Budget Office estimate of \$12 billion. The bill waives cost containment caps, greatly reduces actual cash contributions by non-federal sponsors, changes long-standing cost sharing rules, increases harbor maintenance expenditures without reforming and prioritizing the program, fails to effectively deal with the existing project backlog, and expands federal responsibilities into new areas. All this is occurring with the backdrop of fiscal pressures from \$16.5 trillion debt. This bill is irresponsible and we urge you to oppose it and amendments that will make the bill worse.

For more information contact Joshua Sewell, [josh\[at\]taxpayer.net](mailto:josh[at]taxpayer.net), or 202-546-8500.

Sincerely,



Ryan Alexander
President