



**TO:** STEVE SMITH  
TOPSAIL ISLAND SHORELINE PROTECTION COMMISSION

**FROM:** MIKE McINTYRE

**SUBJECT:** MAY MONTHLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**DATE:** MAY 25, 2017

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## MONTHLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### **FY 2017 Appropriations**

On May 3 and May 4, respectively, the House and Senate passed the \$1.07 trillion “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017” (“omnibus”), funding the federal government for the remainder of the 2017 fiscal year (September 30, 2017). President Trump signed the bill into law on Friday, May 5, just hours before a temporary one-week “Continuing Resolution” (CR) expired. Congress had been operating on a longer-term CR which expired on April 28; however, after lawmakers failed to complete work on the omnibus package by the April 28 deadline, they had to pass another short-term CR through May 5 to complete negotiations.

The 1,665-page omnibus package is the product of several weeks of contentious negotiations over more than 150 policy riders proposed to be attached to the bill. The legislation includes full appropriations legislation and funding for 11 of the 12 annual appropriations bills. One bill, the FY 2017 Military Construction-Veterans Affairs (MilCon-VA) bill, was enacted on September 29, 2016. However, the FY 2017 omnibus does contain \$297.7 million in supplemental appropriations for MilCon-VA.

The package does not include many of President Trump’s last minute funding requests. It does not provide funding for construction of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, eliminate money for so-called sanctuary cities that do not fully cooperate with federal immigration law, or cut funding for Planned Parenthood. In a win for Republicans, the measure does provide \$1.5 billion for border security and \$15 billion in additional defense funding. The defense increase is matched by a boost to non-defense programs for a total of \$30 billion in additional funding over the sequester level set by a previous budget deal. None of the Trump Administration’s \$18 billion in non-defense cuts were included.

The FY 2017 omnibus also contains an additional \$2.434 billion in supplemental funding to address pressing humanitarian needs and disaster recovery efforts (including hurricane relief) in the U.S. and around the world . This supplemental funding includes \$407 million in emergency funding to support wildfire-fighting efforts in Western states; \$400 million in emergency funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant program to support states and local governments in rebuilding communities post-disaster; and \$528 million in emergency highway and bridge funding to repair infrastructure damaged by natural disasters or catastrophic events.

*[For more in-depth information on provisions included in the omnibus, please refer to the memo titled, “Highlights of the FY 2017 Appropriations Omnibus.” Please note page 5 of this memo, which lists key points and highlights for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.]*

## **National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization**

The current authorization for the National Flood Insurance Program (“NFIP”) is set to expire on September 30, 2017. Discussion on reauthorization of the program began in mid-2016; however, no formal introduction of reauthorization legislation has occurred. So far, we have only seen the release of “principles,” outlines and draft language. In December 2016, the House Financial Services Committee Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance (the committee and subcommittee of jurisdiction) released a set of draft NFIP reauthorization “[principles](#),” then later released a longer [6-page outline](#) of its forthcoming discussion draft proposal on May 10, 2017. On the Senate side, Senators Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) released [draft language](#) for a 10-year reauthorization of the NFIP on April 26, 2017. Neither Senator Gillibrand nor Cassidy are on the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee (the committee of jurisdiction); therefore, it is possible that the Committee will draft its own NFIP reauthorization legislation.

Over the past year, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee and House Financial Services Committee held numerous hearings on NFIP reauthorization. The discussion in these hearings focused on several major topics, including creating a more robust private flood insurance market, reducing the number of repeat flood loss properties, improving mapping and data, and increasing opportunities for mitigation and flood protection. The draft outlines and language released thus far reflect these hearing discussions.

The documents currently being circulated were strategically released in draft form so Members of Congress can gauge the public’s reaction to certain provisions and policy proposals. We will provide TISPC with more detailed information once a bill is formally introduced.

## **UPDATE ON TISPC FEDERAL LOBBYING PRIORITIES**

The current status of and/or the strategy to address each item is outlined below:

### **1. North Topsail Beach – Continue to facilitate changes to the CRBA maps**

We continue to work with Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Representative Walter Jones (R-NC) on a potential legislative resolution to this issue. We have been in contact with Senator Burr’s and Senator Tillis’ offices (who have taken the lead) as they work with appropriate committee staff to determine how best to proceed legislatively. We will advise TISPC once a decision has been made by the delegation on timing for moving forward.

### **2. Topsail Beach – Obtain waivers for use of sand from inlet CRBA area for beach nourishment**

As discussed in the April Monthly Legislative Update to TISPC, we advised your congressional delegation that further discussion with both Army Corps of Engineers (“Corps”) personnel and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (“Service”) personnel is necessary to determine which legislative action(s) needs to be taken to resolve the issue. We have contacted relevant Service personnel regarding this matter and will follow up with the congressional offices once necessary information is secured. We are pleased to report that each congressional office has responded favorably to our request to resolve this issue.

**3. Island Wide – Obtain federal funding for approved federal beach nourishment projects (Surf City/North Topsail Beach & Topsail Beach).**

We discussed both projects with your congressional delegation during our meetings in Washington on March 22 and 23. At our request, Representatives Jones and Rouzer have sent a joint letter to the Corps expressing support for both projects. Senators Burr and Tillis are currently working to finalize a letter. Staffers from both Senate offices have been in contact with the Corps, the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (the committee of jurisdiction on water infrastructure issues) regarding prospects for both projects. Staff informed us that positive views were expressed by their sources in these discussions. We expect the Senators to finalize and send their letter to the Corps very soon.

It is important to note that since FY 2017 appropriations have been approved by Congress, the Corps is now working on its FY 2017 work plan, which we expect to be released sometime in the next one to two months. Due to the shortened fiscal year, the Corps will likely not take the full 60 days to release its FY 2017 work plan. We will notify TISPC after the FY 2017 work plan is released.

*[For your reference, a copy of the letter Representatives Jones and Rouzer sent to the Corps is included as an attachment to this memo.]*