



TO: STEVE SMITH
TOPSAIL ISLAND SHORELINE PROTECTION COMMISSION

FROM: MIKE McINTYRE

SUBJECT: OCTOBER MONTHLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2019

The October Monthly Legislative Update provides information on the following topics:

- Washington News
 - Budget and Appropriations
 - National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization
 - North Carolina Plans Draft Dredge Material Study with the Corps
 - Burr, Tillis Sponsor Effort to Provide Tax Relief to Natural Disaster Victims
- Update on TISPC Federal Priorities

WASHINGTON NEWS

Budget and Appropriations

On September 26, the Senate passed a House-passed continuing resolution (CR) funding the federal government through November 21, averting a government shutdown when the new fiscal year began on October 1. Congress needed to pass the legislation because it has yet to finalize any of its 12 spending bills. The House has cleared 10 of its 12 bills by largely partisan votes, while the Senate is planning its first floor vote on a four-bill “minibus” package this week. (It is possible that there will be a vote on a second minibus package in the Senate this week as well.)

In order to make real progress on appropriations, Congress still needs to agree on top-line funding amounts for each bill, which appropriators say they are still working to finalize. Talks are already underway about another CR that would extend funding into mid- to late-December in the event an agreement cannot be reached by November 21.

National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization

The CR passed by Congress on September 26 also reauthorized the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through November 21, marking the 13th extension of the NFIP in just the past two years.

As we previously reported, there are NFIP reauthorization bills in both the House and Senate. However, the bills differ substantially in many ways, which will require considerable negotiation between the House and Senate, which has yet to occur in earnest.

North Carolina Plans Draft Dredge Material Study with the Corps

The North Carolina Division of Water Resources and the Army Corps of Engineers are teaming up under the Section 22 Planning Assistance to States (PAS) program to conduct an analysis of dredge material placement sites in support of an overall statewide coastal dredged material management plan (DMMP). Although a full statewide DMMP would include the evaluation of federal and non-federal dredged material placement facilities (DMPFs), this PAS study will only assess the non-federal components of the DMMP. The study will focus on approximately 30 to 60 DMPFs either owned, operated, or managed by the state, local municipalities, private marinas, conservation groups and other non-federal stakeholders. The PAS study is necessary for future non-federal dredging projects since the Army Corps of Engineers announced that only dredge material from federal projects could be placed in Corps-maintained facilities.

[Click here](#) for the draft Scope of Work for the study. Coastal Review Online also recently published an excellent [story](#) about the study.

Burr, Tillis Sponsor Effort to Provide Tax Relief to Natural Disaster Victims

In late September, Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Thom Tillis (R-NC), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced legislation to provide tax relief to victims of several 2018 natural disasters. The bipartisan bill, the *Hurricanes Florence and Michael and California Wildfire Tax Relief Act*, would continue to provide relief to victims of last year's natural disasters. According to the sponsors, the bill would:

- Allow more taxpayers to claim a deduction for personal casualty losses by removing the requirement to itemize;
- Remove penalties on certain hardship withdrawals from retirement accounts;
- Encourage employers in hard-hit areas to retain employees;
- Allow taxpayers to use earned income from the preceding year when claiming Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit;
- Suspend limits on charitable contributions to disaster relief efforts.

UPDATE ON TISPC FEDERAL ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Surf City and North Topsail Beach Project

We are still awaiting an announcement by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding which projects will be awarded funding with the additional disaster appropriations provided by the *Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019* (P.L. 116-20, Disaster Relief Act). An announcement should be forthcoming in the near future. We will inform TISPC of any definitive news as soon as such information is available.

North Topsail Beach CBRA Mapping Issue and Topsail Beach Sand Borrowing Issue

On Monday, October 22, we met with Congressman Murphy's new policy staffer handling coastal and Army Corps of Engineers issues, Ray Celeste, who officially started on October 15. Ray previously handled defense issues for Congressman Jones. He will continue to handle defense issues for Congressman Murphy in addition to coastal and Corps issues. Over the course of an hour, we briefed Ray on all of TISPC's key issues. We spent the majority of the meeting discussing the North Topsail Beach CBRA mapping issue, but also provided detailed summary overviews of both the Surf City and North Topsail Beach Project and the sand borrowing issue. We should also note that we have had two conversations with the Congressman's Chief of Staff, Steve Moffatt, since the beginning of October to make him aware of TISPC priorities as well, though any detailed-oriented discussions regarding TISPC priorities will be with Ray Celeste moving forward.

After Ray has had a chance to review all of the documents and information we provided him during the meeting, especially about the North Topsail Beach CBRA mapping issue, we plan to meet again. He wants to make sure that he and the Congressman fully understand the North Topsail Beach issue in particular before the Congressman proceeds with cosponsoring [H.R. 2834](#), the House bill resolving the North Topsail Beach CBRA mapping issue that was introduced by Congressman Rouzer in May. To that end, **Congressman Murphy's office has requested that the TISPC and the Town of North Topsail Beach provide letters or resolutions requesting that Congressman Murphy cosponsor H.R. 2834 and expressing why resolving the issue is of such great importance to the community.** The initial request was just for a letter or resolution from North Topsail Beach; however, we also suggested that the TISPC provide a letter or resolution as well because it shows the support of the whole Topsail Island community, as well as Pender and Onslow Counties. It was agreed that showing broad support would be beneficial as the Congressman and his staff evaluate the prospects of H.R. 2834. As previously stated, we are working positively and cooperatively with the Congressman's office to ensure that they understand the issue and have all the information they need to move forward. They have been very engaged and are eager to be of assistance to the Towns.

Once the letters or resolutions are finalized, please kindly forward copies via email to Congressman McIntyre and Stephanie Missert so they can transmit them to Congressman Murphy's office. If our assistance is required with regard to the drafting of any letters or resolutions, please let us know.