



TO: STEVE SMITH
TOPSAIL ISLAND SHORELINE PROTECTION COMMISSION

FROM: MIKE McINTYRE

SUBJECT: JUNE MONTHLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

DATE: JUNE 19, 2020

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

- Washington News
 - Budget and Appropriations
 - Possible July Timeframe for Next Coronavirus Stimulus Package
 - House WRDA Bill Expected Before July 4
 - House Releases Infrastructure Package Framework
 - FEMA Releases Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season
 - ASBPA Sends Letter to Congressional Leadership Requesting Aid for Coastal Communities
- Advocacy Update

WASHINGTON NEWS

Budget and Appropriations

The annual appropriations process has been delayed due to complexities caused by the coronavirus, but Congress is finally starting to move forward on its FY 2021 appropriations bills. The Senate Appropriations Committee will begin marking up FY 2021 appropriations bills as soon as the week of June 22 with the goal of finishing all committee-level work by the July 4 recess. The House Appropriations Committee plans to begin markups during the weeks of July 6 and July 13 with the first floor votes being held the weeks of July 20 and July 27. Delays in these proposed timelines are possible.

It is important to note that appropriators must adhere to FY 2021 budget caps that were set prior to the coronavirus pandemic, meaning they will have to stay under the \$626.5 billion FY 2021 non-defense appropriations cap, which is just over a 2 percent increase in annual funding. It is possible that some funding accounts could be moved to “emergency” funding to stay under the caps, but this strategy is not likely to gain many supporters. As bill text is released over the next several weeks, we will get a better idea of how appropriators plan to handle additional calls for funding due to the pandemic.

Possible July Timeframe for Next Coronavirus Stimulus Package

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) said the next coronavirus stimulus bill will be the “fourth and final” response package. He expects to begin considering the next proposal no earlier than

mid- to late-July. Leader McConnell said additional funding for state and local governments could be included, along with assistance for schools, small businesses, and health care, and possibly liability protections for employers, but more concrete details are currently unknown.

Leader McConnell also said more time is needed to assess the effectiveness of the other coronavirus response bills before considering more legislation. "We need to push the pause button here and think through the next step and do it very carefully," McConnell said. "We do have [to consider] the potential long-term health of the country with this level of massive debt."

On June 5, President Trump said at a news conference that the Administration plans to request additional stimulus funding from Congress to address the economic fallout resulting from the pandemic. The President did not provide many details about what the Administration plans to request, but he specifically mentioned requesting a payroll tax cut and aid for restaurants and "various pieces of the entertainment industry." The Administration reportedly wants up to \$1 trillion in aid in the next stimulus package.

House WRDA Bill Expected Before July 4

The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee is expected to release its draft Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) reauthorization bill before the July 4 recess. WRDA legislation, among other things, authorizes projects and provisions that fall under the purview of the Army Corps of Engineers. We expect the bill to be marked up in Full Committee the week of July 6 and possibly be considered by the full House before the August break.

House Releases Infrastructure Framework

On June 18, House Democrats released a 5-page [framework](#) for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure spending package. We are still awaiting the text of the bill so many details are not known. However, the 5-page overview indicates that the package will include funding for highways; bridges; transit; rail; airports; ports/harbors; schools and childcare; housing; broadband; wastewater; drinking water; clean energy; health care; environment/public lands; and the postal service. Several specific items listed in the framework that would be of interest to TISPC include:

- Funding for "essential dredging and upkeep of American harbors, ports, and channels."
- "Financing support for state and local government investments and spurring private investment through the tax code by permanently reinstating Build America Bonds and Advance Refunding Bonds, and increasing and expanding the issuance of Private Activity Bonds."
- Funding to "[strengthen] our coasts through a \$3 billion grant program for shovel-ready projects to restore Great Lakes and coastal habitats and marine ecosystems."

We will provide additional details as more information is released.

FEMA Releases Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season

In late May, FEMA released [guidance](#) titled "COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season" to help emergency managers and public health officials prepare for disaster situations while continuing to respond to and recover from the coronavirus. Specifically, the guidance:

- Describes anticipated challenges to disaster operations posed by the coronavirus;
- Highlights planning considerations for emergency managers based on current challenges;
- Outlines how FEMA plans to adapt response and recovery operations;
- Creates a shared understanding of expectations between FEMA and emergency managers; and
- Includes guidance, checklists, and resources to support emergency managers response and recovery planning.

FEMA says it will continue to operate under the framework of locally executed, state managed, and federal supported incident response. However, the guidance states that “Emergency managers should anticipate the added complexities of conducting response and recovery operations while taking preventative measures to protect the health and safety of disaster survivors and the disaster workforce.... All reviews and adjustments to plans should factor in FEMA’s planned operational posture, social distancing measures, CDC guidance, and [state and local] public health guidance.” The guidance also says that state and local governments “should be prepared to coordinate through virtual communications and ensure the public is aware that the FEMA application process may be virtual and not in-person due to health and safety considerations.”

FEMA is hosting a [webinar series](#) on the Operational Guidance. Upcoming webinars will be held on the following dates:

- June 23, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm ET
- June 24, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm ET
- June 25, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET

[ASBPA Sends Letter to Congressional Leadership Requesting Aid for Coastal Communities](#)

In early June, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) sent a detailed [letter](#) to House and Senate leadership requesting aid for coastal communities in future coronavirus response legislation. The letter outlines several specific requests that would be of interest to TISPC, including (but not limited to):

- **Direct funding to states and communities**, such as the funding proposed in the House-passed HEROES Act and the SMART Act, which calls for \$500 billion in direct aid to state and local governments;
- **Increased appropriations for funding programs that are specific to coastal communities**, including the Coastal Zone Management Act Program Grants and National Coastal Resilience Grants;
- **100 Percent Federal Cost Share for FEMA response and recovery efforts**; and
- **Reduced or waived local cost-shares for federal coastal storm damage reduction projects and coastal inlet and channel dredging projects** (and calls for the Corps to cover additional costs of beneficial placement of dredge material on beaches).

ADVOCACY UPDATE

Activity on Capitol Hill is steadily increasing despite coronavirus-related restrictions remaining in place in the Washington, DC, metro area. However, activity is still not back to normal—access to the Capitol Hill complex remains restricted until further notice, and the congressional schedule has changed considerably. The House, for example, changed most of its schedule for the month of June to “Committee Work Days” where work will focus on committee-level activities as opposed to floor activities. The next votes in the House are not scheduled until June 30.

Restricted access to the Capitol has forced the institution to explore ways it can continue to conduct business virtually. The House of Representatives Chief Administrative Officer released [guidance](#) to Member offices regarding their recommendations for using certain audio/video conferencing tools to host public and private meetings. Poyner Spruill and TFG have become familiar with this guidance and have set up “Virtual Hill Days” with Member offices to evaluate the effectiveness of conducting virtual Hill meetings with Members and staff. These meetings have gone remarkably well and we are recommending that Capitol Hill meetings be conducted in this manner until regular business resumes.

We discussed the idea of conducting a Virtual Hill Day in July with TISPC at the May meeting. Chairman Smith notified us that TISPC was interested in scheduling a Virtual Hill Day. Accordingly, we are working to set up a Virtual Hill Day for Wednesday, July 22 to “meet” with relevant Members, staff, and committees to discuss TISPC’s federal priorities. If all the meetings cannot be scheduled on July 22 or if any offices have conflicts on July 22, we will aim to schedule any additional meetings on the morning of Thursday, July 23. These video conference meetings will replace the in-person meetings we had to canceled in March due to the coronavirus.

As we have mentioned to Chairman Smith, we have also discussed the possibility of members of the congressional delegation and/or their staff visiting Topsail Island on Thursday, August 20 (since the Republican convention will conflict with August 27, the regularly scheduled TISPC meeting date).

We continue to check-in with your congressional delegation via phone and email regularly. We recently held phone conferences with the Senate offices to discuss key priorities and plan to do the same with the House offices. (One phone conference of which is scheduled for early next week.) Once we finish this series of phone conference with your delegation, we will report back to you on where we must focus our discussion for the July Virtual Hill meetings.

This month, we also held a phone conference with Chairman Smith, Topsail Beach town staff, and TI Coastal to discuss next steps on addressing issues with two preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panels drawn for Topsail Beach. Together we developed an outreach plan to the North Carolina Floodplain Mapping Program, and Poyner Spruill and TFG are in the process of making the congressional delegation aware of this strategy. We will continue to work with Topsail Beach as the outreach plan is implemented.

In addition, we are pleased to report that in early June, the North Carolina Association of Realtors (NAR) Legislative Committee unanimously approved a request to support efforts to amend the boundaries of

CBRS Unit L06 in North Topsail Beach. NAR will notify us and the Town when they send official documentation of the approval to the National Association of Realtors (NAR) so we can conduct further follow up with NAR, and so we can provide documentation to the congressional delegation to aid in our continued collective efforts to move legislation forward in Congress.

As a reminder, TFG has created several webpages on our website specifically focused on providing coronavirus-related resources to local governments and public agencies. TFG has created a [Coronavirus Update Library](#), [Federal Guidance Resources Webpage](#), and [Small Business Resources Webpage](#) to store TFG memos and briefs on the federal coronavirus response, as well as critical information and guidance released by Congress and the Administration. If you have any question about information provided on these webpages, please let us know!