



THE UNITED STATES  
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS



March 19, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair, Senate Committee on the Environment  
and Public Works  
170 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the  
Environment and Public Works  
530 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-3904

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chair, House Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
1135 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-2506

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-4702

Dear Chairwoman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the state and local leaders our organizations represent, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the National Governors Association (NGA), The Council of State Governments (CSG), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC), the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) appreciate the opportunity to provide input during the authorization process for the 2026 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). We maintain that perpetuating a strong water infrastructure system and ensuring access to clean and safe drinking water is essential to supporting the nation’s economic growth and global competitiveness. Our members stand ready to work with you to ensure the passage of a new bipartisan WRDA bill in 2026. As your committees begin to develop legislation, we offer the following as a framework:

**Biennial Authorization**

The WRDA is crucial for the continued protection, maintenance and development of both our natural resources and water infrastructure systems including ports, harbors and waterways. It provides states and local governments with the added stability necessary to meet water infrastructure needs while also supporting the safety, environmental protection and economic development of our communities. In the past decade, Congress enacted five separate water resource development packages on a biennial, bipartisan basis. We strongly urge Congress to stay on this course and approve this vital bipartisan legislation in 2026 and continue to maintain a two-year authorization schedule moving forward.

**Intergovernmental Collaboration**

We were encouraged by the 2024 provisions requiring the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a process to formally consult with stakeholders, including state and local governments, on future and pending WRDA projects, annual district budgets, deauthorized projects and guidance documents. The 2024 provisions ensure that unique



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perspectives on water infrastructure projects within communities are considered. Our organizations encourage you to continue to build on this meaningful consultation with state and local governments to foster a greater consensus and increase the effectiveness of the Corps overall. Recognizing the role of state and local governments in implementing federal laws, Congress passed the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to control, if not eliminate, the imposition of unfunded federal mandates on states and localities. Additionally, Executive Order 13132 was signed in 1999, explicitly required all federal agencies to formally consult with state and local governments when proposed regulations will have a direct impact on them.

### **Maintenance and Modernization of Our Nation's Ports and Harbors**

We were pleased that WRDA 2020 unlocked billions of dollars in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for maintenance dredging activities outside discretionary budget limitations. We continue to encourage Congress to appropriate the maximum allowable funds for this purpose and make them available immediately to increase investment in our nation's economy and infrastructure and to create and sustain U.S. jobs, maximizing the Corps capabilities. It is vital that we continue to build on previous federal efforts to ensure our nation's ports and harbors remain competitive globally. Continued support for the beneficial use of dredged material is essential for meeting economic and environmental goals.

### **Flooding Mitigation and Resilience**

With the rise in increasingly catastrophic and costly extreme weather events, intense flooding has become an unwelcome reality for many state and local governments. We support congressional efforts that provide the necessary aid to state and local governments to ensure they have the capabilities to mitigate potential flood and storm damage, including using natural infrastructure and dam safety initiatives. As severe weather events become more commonplace, our members and their constituents ask for a strong federal partner and funding to make communities more resilient.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the safety and modernization of our nation's water infrastructure needs remain top national priorities in this seventh consecutive iteration of the WRDA. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us: Ben Nasta (NCSL) at 202-624-3597 or [benjamin.nasta@ncsl.org](mailto:benjamin.nasta@ncsl.org); Richard Lukas (NGA) at 202-624-3623 or [rlukas@nga.org](mailto:rlukas@nga.org); Jamal Nelson (CSG) at 202-624-5460 or [jnelson@csg.org](mailto:jnelson@csg.org); Charlotte Mitchell Duyshart (NACo) at 202-661-8826 or [cmitchell@naco.org](mailto:cmitchell@naco.org); Carolyn Berndt (NLC) at 202-626-3101 or [Berndt@nlc.org](mailto:Berndt@nlc.org); Judy Sheahan (USCM) at 202-355-8540 or [jsheahan@usmayors.org](mailto:jsheahan@usmayors.org); Amber Snowden (ICMA) at 202-460-2280 or [asnowden@icma.org](mailto:asnowden@icma.org).

Sincerely,



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Chief Executive Officer  
National Conference of State Legislators

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Matthew D. Chase  
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Tom Cochran  
CEO and Executive Director  
The United States Conference of Mayors

Julia D. Novak  
CEO/Executive Director  
International City/County Management Association

CC: Members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee  
Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee