

Congress Completes Work on FY05 Appropriations

11/22/04

Lawmakers Reject Administration's Proposal for Beach Projects

On Saturday, Congress approved a final spending package that includes the nine unfinished FY05 Appropriations bills.

The President is expected to sign the bill into law as soon as the House of Representatives approves a procedural item related to the bill this week.

Last-minute negotiations allowed the stalled Energy and Water Appropriations bill to become part of the 1000+ page spending package. Appropriators resolved their disputes regarding the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository in Nevada, clearing the major hurdle that had stalled this bill for most of the year.

The Army Corps of Engineers receives \$4.7 billion in the bill. This is approximately \$100 million less than the House had approved earlier this year. The Senate did not produce an Energy and Water bill this year.

Spending totals for the Corps' shoreline protection program are \$112 million, of which \$100 million is for construction and the remainder for studies. The total is 7% lower than Congress appropriated for FY '04, but 61% higher than the President requested.

Project-specific funding details can be obtained by contacting Marlowe & Company.

Proposed Beach Policy Rejected

Congress also included language in the bill that rejects the Administration's attempts to end the federal beach nourishment program. In fact, the bill asserts Congressional authority over the Corps' shoreline protection program by prohibiting the Administration from implementing any changes to existing policies without the approval of Congress.

The language reads as follows: "The Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, shall not implement changes to existing shoreline protection policies that have not been specifically authorized by Congress."

This is another major victory for coastal communities in their effort to continue the successful shoreline protection program.

Substantial credit must be given to coastal Members of Congress who voiced

strong opposition to this latest attempt to dismantle the federal beach program.

In addition to Congressional resistance, grassroots lobbying and legal challenges have met this policy since it was proposed in February.

Reprinted with permission from *Coastal Connection* (November 22, 2004), Marlowe & Company, 1667 K Street NW Ste 480, Washington, DC 20006, <http://www.marloweco.com>.