

## **Carper Celebrates Senate Passage of Major Water Infrastructure Bill**

*Bipartisan legislation co-authored by Senator Carper includes key priorities for Delaware's economy and environment*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.), top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW), celebrated Senate passage of the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA) – a major bipartisan, bicameral water infrastructure bill that Senator Carper co-authored along with Senators John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.). The bill passed the House unanimously last month and cleared the Senate this morning by a vote of 99-1. The bill now heads to the President's desk to be signed into law.

This is the first and only major infrastructure bill to pass this Congress. The legislation advances key programs and makes much-needed legislative changes to support clean drinking water systems, waterways, beaches, and port projects, such as the expansion of the Port of Wilmington. It directs the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to make vital improvements to water infrastructure to prepare Delaware – the lowest lying state in the country – for the growing risks of climate change. This bill also prioritizes the needs of stakeholders in Delaware and around the country to make sure our economy grows in a safe and environmentally friendly way.

**“This bipartisan bill is a major win for Delaware and families across our country, and I’m proud that it’s on its way to be signed into law,”** said Senator Carper. **“This bill invests in critical infrastructure that keeps our country moving, creates an environment for good-paying jobs here at home, incentivizes businesses to buy and use American products, and authorizes funding for EPA to expand investments in clean drinking water for the first time in more than two decades. I fought hard to make sure key priorities for Delaware were included in this bill, and I’m proud we were able to deliver. For our state, this bill includes a new \$75 million program to address critical beach nourishment projects along our coasts, authorizes new funding and provides new tools for communities like Blades and Millsboro to help address drinking water contamination, and makes sure the Port of Wilmington has the resources it needs to move forward on its expansion project that will keep it competitive for years to come. At the same time, this bill promises greater transparency and improves collaboration between local and federal governments to ensure taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently. They say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure – nowhere is this truer than in this bill, and I hope that it is signed into law quickly.”**

Overall, America's Water Infrastructure Act:

- Increases the existing height limit authorization for the deposit of dredge material from the Delaware River dredging project from 10 feet to 35 feet, a necessary development to expand the Port of Wilmington at the new Edgemoor location and double its annual output;
- Expands the existing \$60 million per year small and disadvantaged community grant program to create a new grant for underground drinking water contamination to help states address communities, like the areas around Millsboro, that face high levels of drinking water contamination;
- Authorizes \$75 million in appropriations for a new beach nourishment and shoreline protection pilot program;

- Authorizes the Corps to expedite, construct, modify, or study more than 100 water resource development projects;
- Reforms the Corps' budgeting process to provide greater transparency for both Congress and the public and mandates that the Corps annually report uncompleted work at all phases of a project's lifecycle;
- Requires the Army Corps to consider natural infrastructure alternatives when developing new projects;
- Gives state and local leaders a greater role in prioritizing Army Corps projects and allows local sponsors to provide advanced funds for projects so that work can be initiated faster and stay on schedule;
- Boosts flood control efforts by reauthorizing levee safety and dam safety programs through 2023;
- Establishes multiple resiliency programs to help communities invest in protecting their water infrastructure from extreme weather events and sea level rise;
- Re-authorizes, for the first time in 22 years, the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund that provides for needed investments in communities across the country, doubling the size of the program from \$1 billion to \$1.95 billion by 2021;
- Authorizes a new \$100 million drinking water program to help areas impacted by natural disasters repair damaged drinking water infrastructure and make such infrastructure more resilient to future storms;
- Extends for five years the Buy America requirements of the drinking water state revolving loan fund to ensure American made products are used to construct projects funded through the program; and
- Expands the lead in schools testing program to provide schools with additional assistance to address lead contamination, including the replacement of drinking water fountains.

Read the text of *America's Water Infrastructure Act* [here](https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/b/a/bae54203-2239-409e-a83d-5611d5bca7d3/4B0382ADDB6536FFBBB697B3BAB4810B.america-s-water-infrastructure-act-of-2018.pdf).

[https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/b/a/bae54203-2239-409e-a83d-5611d5bca7d3/4B0382ADDB6536FFBBB697B3BAB4810B.america-s-water-infrastructure-act-of-2018.pdf](https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/b/a/bae54203-2239-409e-a83d-5611d5bca7d3/4B0382ADDB6536FFBBB697B3BAB4810B.america-s-water-infrastructure-act-of-2018.pdf)