

# Water Resources Development Act of 2024/U.S. Senate Environment & Public Works Committee: Arkansas Provisions



**Walter Wright, Jr.**  
wwright@mwlaw.com  
(501) 688.8839

06/04/2024

The United States Senate Environment & Public Works Committee has advanced the following legislation:

*Water Resources Development Act of 2024 ("WRDA2024").*

The Water Resources Development Act is biennial legislation that authorizes flood control, navigation, and ecosystem restoration projects for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("Corps").

WRDA2024 is authorizing legislation. It does not include funding. Such funding is provided separately through the appropriations process.

WRDA2024 advanced from the Committee with a 19-0 vote. The legislation includes:

- 81 feasibility studies.
- 8 new or modified construction projects.
- Directs the Corps to expedite the completion of several ongoing studies and projects from past Water Resource Development Acts.
- Increases transparency across Corps water infrastructure projects.
- Allows districts and divisions of the Corps to issue waivers under certain circumstance from 3x3x3 requirements for feasibility studies.
- Increases the maximum amount of funds the Corps may contribute under the existing authorities programs.
- Improves the Tribal Partnership Program.
- Increases the federal cost-share for inland waterway projects to 75%.

United States Senator Boozman of Arkansas (a member of the Committee) issued a news release noting Arkansas-related components of WRDA2024 which include:

- Advancing the reallocation study for the Beaver Water District.
- Modifying the federally authorized area of Osceola Harbor to manage the increased barge traffic, supporting the growth of the port and regional steel industry which significantly contribute to economic development in the region.
- Prioritizing funding for the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System to mitigate cost overruns with a cost-share adjustment. This would allow the nation to realize sizable economic returns, reduce the supply chain's environmental footprint and address uncertainty in the global agricultural and energy markets

- Creating a comprehensive approach to managing the Lower Mississippi River and implementing restoration practices to support animal habitats in Arkansas and Tennessee.
- Reestablishing the Levee Owners Advisory Board to engage local owner-operators to improve public participation and enhance flood protection.
- Addressing levee safety guidelines under development and ensuring they follow Congressional intent.
- Examining digital infrastructure and real-time data collection by authorizing a study on water distribution optimization.
- Permitting the Corps to reinvest recreation fees to improve facilities where the funds were collected, creating an incentive for the Corps to maintain good facilities and provide quality recreational opportunities on our public lands.

A link to the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee summary of the bill and text can be found [here](#).

A copy of Senator Boozman's news release addressing Arkansas projects can be found [here](#).