



TO: TOPSAIL ISLAND SHORELINE PROTECTION COMMISSION
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SUBJECT: AUGUST MONTHLY REPORT AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
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The August Monthly Report and Legislative Update provides information on the following:

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 - Rep. Rouzer Introduces Bipartisan CURRENT Act as EPA Advances Section 401 Rule
 - CISA Warns of Rising Cyberattacks on U.S. Water Utilities

Advocacy Update

Surf City CSRM Beach Renourishment Project

It was an honor to attend the signing ceremony for the Surf City Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) on Monday, August 17, and to formally wrap up an effort that so many have spent so much time working on. The signing of the PPA is a significant achievement for Surf City, the Commission, and everyone who advocated for the project over the years, and it clears the way for the coastal storm risk management work to move forward. We were glad to be part of the milestone and will continue to assist and serve as a resource to Surf City and the Commission as the project advances.

TFG Memo: Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2026

Both the House and Senate have advanced their biennial Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bills. The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee unanimously approved its version, authorizing 14 projects and 133 studies, including new flood and ecosystem work.

The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee followed with a broader bipartisan bill, unanimously advanced by the Committee. Beyond authorizing eight new Army Corps projects, the Senate version reauthorizes EPA drinking water and wastewater funding, adds a PFAS pilot program, and pushes the Corps toward nonstructural flood solutions like home buyouts. It also directly responds to the shutdown-era freeze of authorized projects in Democratic-led states, barring the Corps from pausing or canceling authorized work and requiring regular progress briefings to Congress.

A TFG memo providing a comprehensive summary of WRDA 2026 is included with this report.

DOE Opens Technical Assistance Application for Coastal, Remote, and Island Communities

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has opened applications for the Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project (ETIPP), which pairs coastal, remote, and island communities with National Laboratory researchers and regional partner organizations to develop more affordable, reliable, and secure energy systems. Selected communities work with those partners for up to 24 months on either strategic energy planning or deep-dive technical assistance, addressing challenges such as generation and storage, energy savings, transmission and distribution, workforce development, and regulatory issues. Across its first five cohorts, ETIPP has supported 95 community projects in 21 states and territories, partnering with local governments, Tribes, community-based organizations, and utilities.

Communities accepted into the program are also eligible for direct funding in addition to in-kind assistance, with up to \$20,000 available for strategic energy planning projects and up to \$50,000 for longer-duration deep-dive engagements. Technical support is delivered through four DOE National Laboratories—Lawrence Berkeley, the National Laboratory of the Rockies, Pacific Northwest, and Sandia—with a regional partner organization providing guidance before, during, and after the engagement. The 2026 application period runs from August 13 to November 18, 2026, and prospective applicants are required to meet with a regional partner to discuss their proposal before applying. More information on the program can be found [here](#).

Washington News

House Adjourns and Senate Wraps Up Busy Agenda Before August Recess

Senate appropriators unveiled a bipartisan stopgap funding measure on August 2, hoping to head off a government shutdown once current appropriations run out on October 1. Crafted by Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-WA), the continuing resolution would hold most federal agencies at existing funding levels through December 11, a week past the December 4 cutoff in the House-passed version (H.R. 9770), which cleared that chamber by a vote of 220-205. Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) teed up a procedural vote in hopes of Senate passage before Senators left town, setting up a return trip to the House when they return from the August recess.

The measure carries real stakes for North Carolina. It would pause, through December 11, a controversial OMB proposal that critics say would give political appointees veto power over federal grant awards, including EPA environmental justice and science funding, a rule that drew heavy public opposition earlier this summer. At the same time, the bill omits the additional \$1.1 billion that North Carolina officials had sought for EPA's ongoing Hurricane Helene recovery work. Other provisions extend FEMA's disaster relief account, keep the National Flood Insurance Program running, maintain wildfire suppression funding, and add \$21.4 million in Medicaid support for typhoon recovery in the Northern Mariana Islands, alongside extensions of trade preferences, cyber liability protections, surface transportation authority, and the Defense Production Act. Collins called the package a “major step toward averting a damaging shutdown,” while

Murray said it fixes a House provision that would have allowed funds to be redirected toward Border Patrol, though she and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) both want the OMB grant rule killed outright rather than simply delayed. Some Republicans, including Sen. Eric Schmitt (R-MO), doubt a shutdown can be avoided given how contentious the funding process has grown heading into the midterms.

Republicans are also trying to advance a scaled-down version of the SAVE America Act through a third reconciliation bill. The House already approved a budget blueprint by a 216-214 margin, giving four committees until September 11 to write \$95 billion in provisions covering defense spending, farm support, and election policy tied to the citizenship-verification push at the heart of the SAVE Act. Rather than enact the full bill, negotiators are eyeing a \$10 billion grant program, likely run through the Election Assistance Commission, that would pay states to voluntarily adopt SAVE Act-style rules, a design meant to survive the Senate's "Byrd bath" review for provisions unrelated to the budget. Budget Director Russ Vought wants Senate Republicans to keep the bill narrow, with no spending offsets or debt ceiling changes attached, but Thune is unsure the votes exist, warning that the amendment marathon known as vote-a-rama would hand Democrats plenty of chances to force uncomfortable votes. Budget Chair Ron Johnson (R-WI) shares that concern about attaching SAVE Act language, defense hawks want a larger number than the House's \$60 billion figure, and Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) isn't convinced another party-line bill is the right approach at all. Vought has already floated a fourth reconciliation bill after the midterms to tackle the debt ceiling.

Rep. Rouzer Introduces Bipartisan CURRENT Act as EPA Advances Section 401 Rule

Congressman David Rouzer (R-NC) has introduced H.R. 9855, the Certainty and Uniform Reviews for Reliable Energy and Transmission (CURRENT) Act, with Rep. Adam Gray (D-CA), bipartisan legislation to reform Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, which requires states to certify that federally permitted projects meet water quality standards. The bill would limit states' ability to impose conditions unrelated to water quality, establish firm review timelines, and streamline judicial review for energy, hydropower, transmission, and carbon dioxide infrastructure projects. Congressman Rouzer framed the bill as building on his earlier PERMIT Act by tightening Section 401 procedures without weakening water quality protections.

The CURRENT Act advances alongside parallel action at EPA, which sent its final Section 401 rule to the White House for interagency review on July 7. The rule would limit state water quality certifications to point-source discharge compliance only, rolling back a 2023 rule that let states weigh broader project impacts. Industry and GOP officials say it curbs states' ability to block pipelines and fossil fuel projects; Democratic states and environmental groups are signaling legal challenges. The rule carries added weight because Republicans and Administration officials view Section 401 changes as central to any broader permitting reform deal in Congress.

CISA Warns of Rising Cyberattacks on U.S. Water Utilities

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) warned of a "significant increase" in cyberattacks targeting U.S. water utilities, days after more than 30 Minnesota community water services were hit in a "coordinated cyberattack" between July 26 and 27. The alert, backed by the FBI and EPA, flagged hackers targeting the industrial controllers that run water treatment plants, though it didn't name specific victims or formally attribute the activity.

Minnesota officials called the situation ongoing, and the FBI confirmed it's working with victims without commenting on attribution. It's unclear if other states have been affected, though the targeted equipment is

widely used nationally. Iranian hackers separately claimed last month to have breached California water systems in retaliation for U.S. strikes on Iran.