

PROTECT OUR FUTURE
ENSURE THAT CORPS PROJECTS ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE
ON MAY 15, 2007 – A MAJORITY OF THE SENATE VOTED YES ON THIS CORPS
GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE AMENDMENT TO WRDA 2007

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the nation witnessed the tragic consequences of an intense storm, an eroded wetlands system, and faulty U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) planning. With scientists projecting that global climate change will produce more intense storms, flooding and sea level rise, Corps planning must respond by accounting for climate change and protecting natural systems that can buffer the effects of that change.

The Kerry-Feingold-Collins-Sanders-Carper Amendment: The amendment would require the Corps to use the best available climate science; account for potential future impacts of climate change on storms and floods; and account for the costs and benefits associated with the loss and protection of wetlands, floodplains, and other natural systems that can buffer the affects of climate change. The amendment also requires the Corps to use, where appropriate, nonstructural approaches to project planning to help protect such natural systems. Unfortunately, this amendment was not adopted, falling short of the 60 votes agreed to for passage.

Global Climate Change Threatens Communities: Global climate change threatens community health and safety. Scientists expect an increase in extreme weather events, including more powerful storms, more frequent floods, and extended droughts. Flooding from tropical storms and hurricanes pose a risk to coastal communities while rapid snowmelt and increased rainfall will increase flooding in other regions.

Healthy Streams, Floodplains, and Wetlands Can Buffer Climate Change Impacts: Healthy rivers, streams, floodplains, and wetlands act as natural sponges and basins. They absorb flood waters and act as barriers between storm surges and homes, buildings, and people. Healthy wetlands help minimize the impacts of drought by recharging groundwater supplies and filtering pollutants from drinking water. These resources also provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife, and exceptional recreational opportunities.

Corps Planning Fails To Account For The Value Of Essential Natural Systems: Corps planning does not account for the value of services provided by healthy rivers, streams, wetlands, and floodplains. The Corps also rarely recommends nonstructural approaches that could provide the same or better project benefits while avoiding damages to these vital resources.

The Status Quo Will Not Protect Our Future: The Corps' traditional approach to flooding problems is to straight jacket rivers with levees and floodwalls. This severs critical connections between rivers and their wetlands and floodplains, and leads to significant coastal and floodplain wetland losses. These approaches have left coastal communities, like New Orleans, far more vulnerable, and have exacerbated flood damages by inducing development in high risk, flood prone areas and by increasing downstream flooding.

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