

Water Resource Development Act Passes Congress

The Act is expected to spur bilateral Columbia River Treaty negotiations

Earlier this month Congress passed, and last week President Biden signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act which contains the Water Resources Development Act of 2022. The Water Resources Development Act authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to take key steps that will help address the impending changes to the Columbia River Treaty's flood control provisions which are currently slated to automatically adjust in September 2024.

The Act authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to study the feasibility of a domestic alternative to relying on Canada for flood risk management in the Columbia River basin, an option that could help protect Northwest electric ratepayers.

"Right now, power customers are bearing the brunt of an outdated Treaty, overpaying Canada by \$300 million or more in hydropower value each year for treaty operations that help flood control but does not create much additional benefit for U.S. generation. Separating these issues is important," said Scott Simms, Chair of the Columbia River Treaty Power Group and Executive Director of the Public Power Council.

While the Corps is authorized to expend funds on "Called Upon" flood control costs, it stipulates that the agency must justify to Congress the amounts needed, and why, before paying Canada once flood control risk management shifts in 2024 – 60 years after the agreement was signed.

Members of the Columbia River Treaty Power Group applaud the efforts of our regional congressional delegation in both the House and Senate to ensure these much-needed provisions were included in the Act.

"This is an issue of great regional importance, and Power Group utilities appreciate the dedication it took to elevate it in national legislation. We look forward to the Corps' future work on this topic," added Simms."

Read more about the Water Resources Development Act in the National Defense Authorization Act Section 8309 at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1605/text> and learn more about the Columbia River Treaty Power Group by visiting www.crtpowergroup.org

The Columbia River Treaty Power Group is advocating for a fair and equitable outcome of a modernized treaty on behalf of electric rate payers through the Northwest. For more information visit www.crtpowergroup.org or follow us on [LinkedIn](#).