



Submission Information for Section 219 Reimbursement Amendment Proposal

The following information is intended for submission to congressional offices accepting proposals under the Water Resources Development Act of 2026. Not all offices will request the information in the exact wording below.

General Questions and Answers

- Is this a Project-Specific Request, Policy Request, or Environmental Infrastructure Request?
 - Policy Request
- Title of Request
 - Sec. 219 Cost Share Reimbursement Amendment
- Agency
 - US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Eligible Account for USACE Projects
 - Policy
- Eligible Mission Area for USACE Projects
 - Environmental Infrastructure (EI)
- Request Description

Amend Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992, as amended, to allow the federal share of project costs authorized under section 219, including paragraphs 300 and 301, which specifically authorizes Corps participation under section 219 in eligible projects carried out to be provided in the form of reimbursements.

The Corps' environmental infrastructure (EI) authorities have expanded significantly since their inception in 1992, yet Section 219 remains one of the only EI authorities that limits the Corps to delivering assistance exclusively through federal procurement. This constraint is increasingly out of step with how other EI authorities operate, including major regional and statewide programs that expressly allow the federal share to be provided through grants or reimbursements to non-federal sponsors. Aligning Section 219 with these long-standing and highly successful models will generate substantial savings for the federal government, reduce

administrative burdens on the Corps, and enable local governments to deliver more infrastructure for every federal dollar invested.

Allowing the Corps to provide the federal share in the form of reimbursements fundamentally reshapes the efficiency of the program. Under the current structure, the Corps must procure and manage each project directly. This requires significant internal engineering, project management, contracting, and oversight capacity, capacity that many districts simply do not have available, especially across hundreds of authorized EI authorities nationwide. The Congressional Research Service notes that the Corps is authorized to reimburse non-federal sponsors under many other environmental infrastructure authorities, and those programs routinely rely on that flexibility to accelerate project delivery.

In contrast, Section 219 projects regularly stall because districts report that they lack the staffing bandwidth or contracting resources to take on the work. When the Corps becomes a required construction manager, limited federal capacity becomes a binding constraint, regardless of congressional intent or available appropriations. As a result, Congress appropriates funds that cannot be efficiently obligated, communities wait years for basic water and wastewater improvements, and the Corps diverts scarce staff time from higher-priority mission areas.

Authorizing reimbursements under Section 219 directly addresses this bottleneck. Non-federal sponsors (cities, counties, regional utilities, and joint powers agencies) are often far better positioned to execute these projects quickly and cost-effectively. They already have local contractors, procurement systems, and shovel-ready designs in place. Many have existing construction programs with standing contracts and competitive rates that are substantially lower than what the Corps must pay through federal procurement rules. Quite often, the non-federal sponsor can perform portions of the work itself, further reducing cost. When allowed to proceed under a reimbursement model, these sponsors can deliver improvements at a fraction of the cost and time required under federal contracting.

The benefits are substantial:

- *Major cost savings to the federal government.*
 - *Non-federal sponsors consistently construct equivalent infrastructure for significantly less than the Corps because they use local contractors, avoid federal procurement premiums, and eliminate duplicated federal project management overhead. The Corps itself acknowledges in comparable EI authorities (such as Section 313, Section 542, Section 552, Section 558, and the Western Rural Water Program) that reimbursable models result in more efficient project delivery.*
- *Increased throughput for limited Corps staff.*
 - *By shifting Section 219 from a “Corps-must-build” model to a “Corps-may-reimburse” model, districts avoid the time-intensive contracting, engineering, and construction oversight functions that currently constrain the program. This allows the Corps to support far more EI projects with the same workforce, and to focus internal capacity on core civil works missions.*
- *Faster delivery of essential infrastructure.*

- *Local sponsors can move immediately upon appropriation, rather than waiting months or years for the Corps to initiate design, environmental documentation, contracting, and project management. This dramatically accelerates the timeline for water, wastewater, stormwater, and environmental restoration projects that are often tied to urgent public health or regulatory compliance needs.*
- *Better alignment with the rest of the Corps' environmental infrastructure portfolio.*
 - *Congress has long allowed reimbursement and grant-style delivery in regional, statewide, and multi-state EI authorities, recognizing the efficiency of such models. Bringing Section 219 into alignment with these existing authorities promotes program consistency and fairness across EI recipients.*
- *A more reliable pathway for obligating congressionally appropriated funds.*
 - *A recent Congressional Research Services Report, Overview of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Infrastructure (EI) Assistance, dated June 27, 2025, highlights that EI assistance frequently depends on the Corps allocating funds through annual work plans, yet many authorized projects never receive funding or face long delays because the Corps cannot take on additional federal procurement workloads. Allowing reimbursements ensures that appropriated dollars move quickly to on-the-ground outcomes rather than getting stuck behind internal capacity barriers.*

In short, the requested amendment allows the Corps to accomplish what Congress intends when it authorizes and funds Section 219 projects: the rapid, efficient delivery of essential local water and environmental infrastructure. It significantly expands the Corps' ability to fulfill congressional direction without expanding the Corps' staffing footprint or federal contracting obligations. It lowers total federal cost exposure while accelerating project timelines. It also empowers local governments, who are already responsible for long-term operations and maintenance, to advance urgently needed projects using the most cost-effective delivery methods available.

Aligning Section 219 with other EI authorities by authorizing reimbursements is, therefore, a fiscally responsible improvement that will multiply the impact of limited federal dollars and greatly strengthen the Corps' ability to support local communities nationwide.

We request the following amendment to section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992, as amended:

At the appropriate place in the bill, add the following:

Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992, as amended, is further amended to redesignate subparagraph (d) as subparagraph (e) and insert a new subparagraph (d) as follows:

(d) Reimbursements – For projects, or separable elements of projects, for which assistance is provided under this section, the Federal share may be in the form of reimbursements of non-Federal project costs.

- Does the request involve a non-federal sponsor?
 - Yes
 - Provide your entity's contact information
- Is this request to change an existing provision or program?
 - Yes
- Provide existing statutory authority
 - Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1992
- Was this request previously authorized?
 - Yes
- Provide Authorizing Legislation
 - Water Resources Development Act of 2024
- Please list the Congressional District of Recipient Organization
 - Provide your entity's Congressional District information

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact The Ferguson Group (TFG) at (202) 331-8500.