

**SHORELINES – August 2003**  
**As presented to the Island Review Magazine.**

**“SAUSAGE MAKING”**

The 13 appropriation bills that must be enacted every year to keep the Federal government in operation are often called “money bills” and essentially represent the discretionary spending wishes for Congress and the President. All of us concerned with beach nourishment, shore protection, inlet sand management, the dredging of our waterways, and similar issues are keeping a close eye on the Energy & Water Development Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2004 (FY 04). Unlike our Local and State fiscal year calendar that runs from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004, the Federal FY 04 starts on October 1, 2003 and concludes on September 30, 2004.

Some critical decisions will be made by the House and Senate Energy & Water Appropriation Subcommittees that are going to dictate the success or failure of our Section 933 Project, and the direction our 50-year Shore Protection Project will be heading.

Let’s summarize the appropriation bill law making process, or “sausage making process” as one should never watch either being made. Both law making and the metaphor of sausage making entails a variety of spices and a host of cooks that often make an untamed mess of the kitchen en route to the final product.

Basically, the President releases his budget in February outlining his priorities and both legislative bodies (House and Senate) immediately begin “massaging” the 13 appropriation bills, reconciling differences, and returning each of the bills to the President to sign into law, or veto. All indications from Capitol Hill have most of the work for the ever-important Energy & Water Development Appropriation Bill completed by August 2003. This work should be completed before a month long recess for the congressional delegation takes place. In theory, Congress should re-convene in September to reconcile the differences in their respective versions of the Energy & Water Development Appropriation Bill in a Joint Conference Committee and forward the final bill to President Bush for his signature before October 1, 2003.

While neither legislative bodies have completed their versions of the Energy & Water Development Appropriation Bill as we enter July, it appears that the House *and* Senate will complete their work by the time you are reading this *Shorelines* article, or shortly thereafter.

Thus, the table is set for the following law making (sausage making) actions:

(A) The Section 933 Project. – As reminder, the Section 933 Project is part of the overall Brandt Island Pump-Out/Section 933 effort that may include up to 6 million cubic yards of sand to nourish a 13.1-mile stretch of Bogue Banks including the beaches of Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, and Indian Beach. Fortunately, the President has recommended almost full funding for the part of the Project that will restore Fort Macon and Atlantic Beach. Usually, the President’s funding recommendations are used as a foundation for additional spending and are rarely ever removed from the final appropriation bill. Funding for the Section 933 effort of the overall project that will restore Pine Knoll Shores and Indian Beach however was not funded in the President’s budget. Thus, we are seeking a congressional “add” while the cooks are in kitchen preparing the Energy & Water Development Appropriations Bill this month

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(July 2003). The game plan for success is simple in theory – gain a congressional add in the House *and* Senate version of the Energy & Water Development Appropriations Bill so there are no discrepancies when the bill goes into Joint Conference. Let's keep our fingers crossed that the blend of spices in the final bill will please our funding palate.

(B) The 50-year Shore Protection Project. – The Shore Protection Project in simple terms is a 50-year long beach nourishment and re-nourishment project that will encompass all of Bogue Banks. We are entering our final year of the Feasibility Phase, which is terminology used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that really means “study phase”. While we have experienced some Federal appropriation shortfalls in the past couple of years, the President has recommended a level of funding in FY 04 that will accommodate our requirements for this upcoming fiscal year and for our previous appropriation shortfalls. This is good news because again, the President's recommendations are almost never reduced in the House or Senate.

By next month (August 2003), we should begin to have a good feel for what level of funding we should be expecting from the Federal government concerning both the Brandt Island Pump-Out/Section 933 and 50-year Shore Protection Projects. The cooks will put some finishing touches on their law making recipes when the Energy & Water Development Appropriations Bill is discussed in Joint Conference Committee but it's almost time to take a seat at the table and see what type of sausage dish has been prepared.