

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
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Paris. You May Have Heard of It. It's [Kind of a Big Deal](#).

The 21st formal meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21), aka The Paris Climate Talks, started this week, and it can be a lot to take in. Luckily there are some handy materials to help understand the talks and their context – whether you're a fan of [pictures](#), [numbers](#), or good ol' [words](#). But why are we, a water shop, in this, a water newsletter, talking about people talking about climate? Because water is where we feel climate change first – again, you can learn about the connection through [words](#) or [pictures](#). It's hard to overstate how [important](#) these climate talks are. Explanations for why it's important range from [biological](#) to [practical](#) to [literary](#) (Margaret Atwood goes Tolkien!).

One of the great things about the holiday season (which in New Orleans basically runs from Voodoo Fest to Jazz Fest) is the way it brings people together at various parties and family gatherings. One of the challenging things about the holiday season is the way it brings people together at various parties and family gatherings. At said gatherings, you might find yourself in conversation with someone who's not convinced that these talks are important or, perhaps, even that climate change is not real. Should that happen, keep two things in mind. First, that everybody hopes climate change is not real, and, second, that it is better illuminate than to denigrate, especially with family around the holiday dinner table. To help with the latter you might want to consider how some actual [scientists](#) have responded to questions challenging the realness of climate change.

Infrastructure Investment: Everyone Needs it, Not Everyone is Getting it

The United States, that country with a near-failing water [infrastructure report card](#), still isn't doing enough to fix it all. However, maybe that's about to change. Congress actually passed something; the House just passed [Senate Bill 611](#) to extend funding for technical assistance for rural water systems.

Some state and local entities are investing, too. Storm levee protection on New Orleans' West Bank got [some support](#) on election day. Part of the West Bank (which is protected by one integrated system) voted to support a property tax to fund storm protection while another part of the West Bank voted down a property tax that would, among other things, lift

The Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and stewardship of water.

Coming up:

[Tulane Environmental Law Summit](#)

New Orleans, LA
February 19-20, 2016

[Center for Natural Resource Economics & Policy](#)

New Orleans, LA
March 20-22, 2016

[State of the Coast 2016](#)

New Orleans, LA
June 1-3, 2016

Water jobs:

[Clean Water Advocate](#)
Environment America

[Water Resources Campaign Coordinator](#)
National Wildlife Federation
Washington, DC

[Tennessee Clean Water Network Staff Attorney](#)
Knoxville, TN

Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

6325 Freret Street, 1st Floor
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-865-5982

tulanewater.org

TWITTER: [@TulaneWaterLaw](https://twitter.com/TulaneWaterLaw)

sinking levees. Sooner or later, different units with shared infrastructure have to get on the same page, [or else](#).

Texas is flexing its water infrastructure muscle, too. Not by, fixing what may be old or broken, but by [awarding a contract](#) to build a new reservoir on the Colorado River and keeping in line with the Western US belief that water that reaches the coast or estuaries is “wasted.” That doesn’t mean it’s all been solved in the East. Most of [the country’s septic systems](#) (which are basically an answer to a lack of water infrastructure) are back East. And who knows what all those things are doing to our water. No, really. [No one knows](#), but researchers and officials are starting to suspect the worst. We already know they’re a main culprit in [Long Island’s water issues](#) and fish kills (goodie! [Yet another one](#)).

Maybe some of these issues will be addressed soon (see for example, presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s [just-announced](#) \$275 billion infrastructure plan or Bernie [Sanders’ \\$1 trillion plan](#). Regardless, nothing on the table or in a candidate’s talking points reaches the [total estimated infrastructure deficit](#) the country faces.

Whatever infrastructure does get built, whenever it gets built, we’d best remember to make it hoodlum-proof. Four young men in Fremont, CA are accused of damaging an inflatable dam, causing \$1 million in damage and letting out 50 million gallons of water. We expect better of you, [Dylan, Drake, Gavin, and Zackory](#).

How About a Watery “Moment of Zen”?

It seems like one of the great themes of this year’s water news has been “WATER [IN SPAAAAAAACE!](#)” Water’s been found all over the solar system from planets to moons to comets. [A nice little video](#) (shot in super-duper ultra-high-definition!) from the International Space Station is a reminder of the [cool ways liquids act](#) in space. Enjoy.

It’s Time to Make Another Water Playlist!

You dear, loyal readers no doubt remember that we crowdsource a playlist of themed songs every now and again. You can even find them on [their own page](#) on our [website](#) now. We’ve done “flood songs” and “rain songs,” so now let’s put together a playlist of songs about or referencing wetlands. So, if you’ve got a song up your sleeve about swamps, marshes, bogs, fens, vernal pools, prairie potholes or the like, send them our way by emailing Chris Dalbom at cdalbom@tulane.edu, and we’ll get together our “wetland songs” playlist for all to enjoy.