

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy
July 26, 2016

It's About [Forgiveness](#)

What's a few billion between friends? That's the question Louisiana is [geared up to ask the federal government](#) as it seeks about \$3.5 billion in debt forgiveness. The money represents Louisiana's share of the massive Hurricane & Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) currently under construction. The total cost of the system is \$14.5 billion, with the Army Corps of Engineers responsible for 100% of the first \$11.1 billion. The remaining \$3.4 billion is subject to a 35% state cost share. That share will be paid off over 30 years, in \$100 million installments. The first payment is due once the project is complete in 2018. Although the debt is around \$1.5 billion, the interest over 30 years will cost [an additional \\$2 billion](#), bringing the total cost to roughly \$3.5 billion.

The [state's financial outlook](#) lately has been less than rosy. A \$100 million payment each year would eat into [funds desperately needed](#) for the Coastal Master Plan. That's why the state plans on asking Congress to wipe the slate clean. The money would be better spent, the state argues, on coastal protection and restoration that benefits the whole country by protecting critical shipping and energy infrastructure.

[Ain't Salty No More](#)

Desalination is helping more countries around the world deal with water scarcity by drawing from the vast but salty ocean. In Israel, it has long been national policy to invest in water infrastructure and technology. Those investments are [paying dividends](#). A fleet of "desal" plants have helped the Israel Water Authority put almost 8 billion gallons of water per year back into the lower Jordan river, aiding ecosystem recovery and reducing strain on neighbors who share the Jordan river. As Uri Ginott, government relations manager for EcoPeace Israel, put it: "Desalination is turning the water issue from a zero-sum game to a win-win. Every drop doesn't have to come at the expense of another."

Meanwhile, [over in Singapore](#), engineers are trying to figure out how to overcome the limits of geography. Singapore is the third most densely populated country in the world (or second, if you count [Macau as part of China](#)). On Jurong, one of the [Lion City's](#) outlying islands, industrial facilities occupy all of the land. A new project, Singapore's fifth desalination plant, will be collocated with a steam generator to use thermal desalination technology. Singapore expects to get [85% of its water](#) from desalination and reclamation by 2060. Collocated

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:

The 19th Annual Conference on Litigating Takings Challenges to Land Use and Environmental Regulations
New Orleans, LA
November 4, 2016

[RAE/The Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)

New Orleans, LA
December 10-15, 2016

Water jobs:

[Associate Attorney](#)
Northwest Office of Earthjustice
Seattle, WA

[CLEE Water Fellow](#)
UC Berkeley School of Law
Berkeley, CA

[Executive Director](#)
Galveston Baykeeper
Houston, TX

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facilities will be critical on an island where space is at a premium.

Insert [Corny Joke](#) Here

“Corn sweat” is coming to Middle America. No, it’s not the [newest Japanese sports drink](#), it is actual moisture coming off the 90+ million acres of corn crops in the Midwest. Like all plants, corn transpires water vapor through pores known as stomata. These stomata open to draw in CO₂, but in the heat they also release evaporated water. During the growing season, a single acre of corn can release about [3,000 to 4,000 gallons of water per day](#).

As New Orleans’ residents know all too well, humidity can make it feel like 110 degrees outside...even though the thermometer mockingly claims it’s in the low nineties. That’s because the presence of moisture in the air raises the dew point, which in turn makes our [own sweat process less efficient](#). All that water in the atmosphere is combining with a mid-summer [heatwave](#) to make for [miserable weather](#) in the Midwest.

Hippies Hate Water—But Maybe Not Anymore

The dangers of marijuana have long been [known](#) as is the fact that [hippies hate water](#), but nothing prepared residents of the town of Hugo in eastern Colorado —or apparently hippies everywhere--for the surprise they got last week when the water of Hugo tested positive for THC, the psychoactive ingredient found in cannabis. While the Centennial State has been at the forefront of marijuana legalization, residents of Hugo have been largely unaffected by the booming cash crop. With no licensed marijuana dispensaries, no greenhouses, and only 62 medical marijuana patients in the whole county, residents were perplexed as to how the compound reached their water.

Scientists immediately expressed doubt about the veracity of the tests. For one thing, THC is not soluble in water, meaning that it would have to be extracted before being introduced into the water. Another problem is the enormous expense involved with contaminating an entire water supply. County health supervisor Dr. John Fox said in a [statement](#) “It would take more product than any of us could afford to contaminate a city water supply to the extent that people would suffer any effects.”

It turns out the [scientists were right](#). Over the weekend, further tests were conducted in a lab that found [no detectable level of THC](#) in the water. It is now believed that the original results were false positives and that maybe someone had tampered with one of Hugo’s wells. So, just how the water tested positive remains a mystery for now rest assured that no stone, [or stoner](#), will be left unturned in the search for the truth