

TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy
April 19, 2018

In or Out? Ballast Water and the Clean Water Act

Whether you know it or not, a lot of the stuff you use, [eat](#), and wear comes to you thanks to ships, ships from around the world. But sometimes less desirable things hitch a ride and we get more than we bargained for. Aside from the occasional [Transylvanian Count](#), the most problematic stowaways come courtesy of ballast water. Think [zebra mussels](#), [sea walnuts](#), [killer algae](#), and [the ever cosmopolitan European Crab](#) and you will get the picture. Some of these uninvited guests pose real problems for native species and water infrastructure. For that reason there has been a trend in recent years to regulate ballast water discharges more stringently, thanks in large part to a [couple of court rulings](#). But that trend could be upended if proposed language in the [U.S. Coast Guard Authorization Act](#) is adopted by Senate this week that, according to critics, would [effectively exempt ballast water regulation from the Clean Water Act](#). [The shipping industry takes a more benign view](#) (undoubtedly supported by the powerful zebra mussel lobby). As TUWW goes to press, it appears that the native crabs, algae, and whelks have the better of things following a procedural vote in the Senate on Wednesday that [scuttled the measure](#)—so for now, [it's just a bill](#), not the law.

Money for Nothing: One Step Forward and a Huge Step Back

This was supposed to be the year for [water infrastructure](#) to be in the spotlight, to [strut](#) its stuff. But for all the speechifying from the White House and others when you get right down to it, the results are a meager gruel, at least if U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) has it right. And as Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation he just might know. At a committee hearing on the White House's proposed 2019 budget request (that would cut the Corps of Engineers by 30% and impose new waterways user fees) Senator Alexander said that "[this year's budget proposal would be a huge step back for our Nation's inland waterways](#)." Strong words and we are sure that you are as [surprised as everyone else](#) that doing more with less is a hard row to hoe when it comes to water and [everything that flows](#).

And So It Goes—And Goes and Goes

As the climate warms it plays out differently in different places. In coastal regions, like our home in coastal Louisiana, it tends to express itself as sea level rise. In mountainous regions it is often seen as reduced snow pack or glacial retreat. When that happens it can result in both increased flooding risk and a diminished overall water supply. The loss of those watery resources can be hard to cope with but the

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:

[Book Signing: A Thirsty Land by Seamus McGraw](#)

Octavia Books; New Orleans, LA
April 19, 2018

[10X Water Summit](#)

Baton Rouge, LA
May 16 and 17, 2018

Water jobs:

[Intern Water Policy and Regulation](#)

The International Water Association
The Hague, Netherlands

[Data Centre Water Specialist](#)

Facebook
Dublin, Ireland

[Climate Change Specialist](#)

Inter-American Development Bank
Washington, DC

[Water Policy Specialist](#)

Water Now Alliance
San Francisco, CA

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loss is multiplied when it comes with an increased cultural and economic costs. That is [the case in Mongolia](#) where retreating glaciers are transforming the grazing grounds that many of the nation's traditionally nomadic herders. The loss of those resources can lead resourceful people to do things they otherwise would not or ought not do. The decline in the fortunes of herding have been offset too often by an increase in looting of the nation's archeological treasures, some dating back 8000 years. [Those who can't do, teach](#), and those who can't herd, loot? Expect to see more of these cascading ramifications as warming continues and waters stop cascading where and when we've come to expect.

Oceans of Help for LV?

[Encroaching oceans may be a growing problem for many cities](#) but Las Vegas, Nevada has a more welcoming view of sea-water. Specifically, to keep Sin City from becoming Sin Agua City, planners there are considering [importing and desalinating sea water](#). Talk about going all in on a bet.

The Orchestra-Water Nexus

Water and music have long gone together. It has inspired composers from the [classical](#) end of the spectrum to the [pop](#) and folk. Just check out our [water themed playlists](#) if you really want proof. Shoot, sometimes water makes the music itself. But what when music—or musical instruments—become the inspiration for ways to manage water itself we are talking about something. [Such is the case with the noble harp](#) whose vertical array of different size strings are inspiring ways of harvesting in otherwise dry places (think coastal mountain ranges). Before you jump up and shout [I'm gonna be the man who walks a thousand miles](#) to get one of these harps, you should know that while harp-ish fog traps might be sort of new, [fog harvesting is not](#). Not if you live in Andes anyway. Nonetheless, we like the idea of doing things in harmony with nature.