



# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law & Policy

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## We're Not Talking About Hurricanes, [We're Talking Best Practices](#)

The old saying “practice makes perfect” might need to be dusted off and given new life, as it seems many have forgotten the value of research and preparation. Thanks to federal cuts, the U.S. [Army Corps doesn't have the funding to conduct inspections of New Orleans' levee system in 2025 or 2026](#), marking a departure from what it considers best practice. Nonfederal sponsors will still carry out their own inspections, but it's a real loss (and alarming) that there won't be any publicly available inspection results. For New Orleans, that nonfederal entity is the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority. They're gonna need [to step up their game](#), especially as this news comes on the heels of a [new report finding that sections of our flood protection system are at risk from subsidence](#).

Water management in South Louisiana is anything but simple and is heavily influenced by the Mississippi River. It's unclear what [big decisions](#) will come next, especially given [the pause of the Corps' Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study](#), which would have provided a vehicle to consider emerging issues. Flood infrastructure is not the only concern on the horizon. Will the Corps modify the [split between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya at Old River Control](#)? What will happen to [wetlands in the river's floodplain](#)? What about expanded industrial operations amidst threats to drinking water in Plaquemines Parish and the Greater New Orleans region? Will water levels along the Mississippi River's tributaries be able to accommodate [the vice president's family outings](#)?

There will certainly be difficult management decisions ahead for the Army Corps. Nevertheless, it still has a job to do and a public to serve. It's good timing that the [Mississippi River Commission](#), established by Congress in 1879 to guide engineering and policy decisions for the Corps' work along the Mississippi River & Tributaries, is [embarking on its annual low water inspection trip](#). They're kicking things off with their first public hearing in St. Louis aboard the [Motor Vessel Mississippi](#). Over the next week, they'll be making stops in Caruthersville, MO, then down to Memphis, TN; to Greenville, MS; and eventually wind their way down to Morgan City, LA for a final hearing next Friday. Don't sit around, and leave it to beaver (well, actually, you [gotta hand it to beavers on this one](#)) – written testimony can be submitted through Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>!

## Communities, Start Your Engines!

A data center is coming to a town near you. [Yes, you!](#) It's becoming so common that even [Dale Earnhardt's estate](#) has come into the debate. Prompted by the inescapable hype of artificial intelligence and the Trump Administration's promotion of the tech industry—from [policies that expedite construction of data centers](#) to [declaring a national emergency](#) in anticipation of data centers' [skyrocketing energy](#) demands ([which are increasingly becoming everyone](#)

[else's problem](#))—these facilities are popping up fast. Top federal officials are embracing it as well. EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin [wants to make the United States the AI Capital of the World](#) because nothing says “protect human health and environment” like the rapid deployment of an energy and water-intensive industry with little regulatory oversight or avenues for public participation.

Despite the tech industry's [rampant use](#) of [nondisclosure agreements](#) with state and local officials ([including Louisiana](#)) in the development of data centers, [communities](#) across the country are catching on and pushing back. Just last night, residents in St. Charles, Missouri, [voiced concerns over a proposed 440-acre data center facility](#), demanding answers over impacts to the long term water supply. Missouri recently passed legislation, which goes into effect this month, that [places restrictions on out-of-state water exports](#) in anticipation of increased interest in water transfers, particularly from states to the west. One expert expressed the importance of water security for future economic development, particularly data center growth, adding that “no major company will move to a state that doesn't have the water resources necessary to expand.” Which makes sense from a business standpoint, except that it hasn't aligned with tech companies' investment decisions. It [hasn't seemed to be a limiting factor in other places, like Texas](#). A multitude of things come to mind when one dreams of the Lone Star State. An [abundant statewide water supply typically is not one of those things](#). Even as the state faces [severe and prolonged drought](#), massive projects like [Stargate are marching forward in West Texas](#). Data centers are [projected to consume close to 7% of total state water](#) supply by 2030. The Texas Water Development Board is currently working on a new state water plan for 2027, but [water use for data centers is not being taken into account](#) in its projections for future water use. There's not much by way of regulating water use at these facilities in many states. In fact, state legislatures have seemed more concerned with [making themselves more attractive for data center investment](#). Although small steps have been taken in some areas to address [water](#) and energy concerns, a comprehensive approach is [far away](#).

Speaking of energy... For Your Information, if you've submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the Department of Energy prior to Fiscal Year 2025, [it will be thrown out unless the requester submits a “still interested” letter](#) to DOE Headquarters. With all these supposed technological improvements in federal agencies, it feels akin to the dating scene back before the invention of [telephones](#).

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### Coming Up:

[Mississippi River Commission Low Water Inspection Meeting](#); Morgan City, LA; August 22, 2025

[Women of the Storm](#): A Screening and Panel Discussion; New Orleans, LA; August 27, 2025

[CRCL Coastal Stewardship Awards](#); Baton Rouge, LA; November 13, 2025

### Water jobs:

[Attorney IV](#); California Water Resources Control Board; Sacramento, CA

[Coastal Organizer – Southeast Texas](#); Healthy Gulf; SE Texas (Golden Triangle)

[Editorial Director](#), Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk; Columbia, MO



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 legal stewardship of water.

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