

# RIVER BUDGET



## National priorities for healthy rivers and clean water in fiscal year 2026 (Oct. 2025 to Sept. 2026)

### Prioritize water infrastructure

#### Fiscal year 2026 budget recommendations

##### Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

**AGENCY:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$4.89 billion for the Clean Water SRF and \$4.38 billion for the Drinking Water SRF

##### Groundwater and Streamflow Information

**AGENCY:** U.S. Geological Survey

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$114 million

##### National Non-point Source Management

**AGENCY:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$275.1 million

##### Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant Program

**AGENCY:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$280 million

##### Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Fund

**AGENCY:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$73 million

The United States is grappling with significant challenges across every facet of its water infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. The American Society of Civil Engineers has assigned a grade of C- to the nation's drinking water infrastructure and a D to its stormwater systems, reflecting the widespread deficiencies and vulnerabilities within these essential networks. Many communities are burdened by aging infrastructure, environmental contamination, and inconsistent or unaffordable access to safe drinking water.

To address community needs and safeguard public health, Congress must build upon the previous investments, ensuring that the nation's water infrastructure becomes not only more resilient but also universally accessible and sustainable. A commitment to modernizing and these systems is essential to creating a more inclusive and sustainable future for all Americans.



BIG CREEK, NORTH CAROLINA  
STEVE WHITE

#### Addressing water contamination

In the Appalachian region, particularly Kentucky and West Virginia, EPA grants have been instrumental in addressing the long-standing environmental and economic challenges associated with mining and other extractive industries. Funds have been directed towards remediating acid mine drainage, which is caused when sulfide minerals are exposed to air and water, creating acidic waters that pollute local rivers and streams. The region has historically been reliant on mining for its economic livelihood, and has faced significant environmental degradation, including widespread land contamination, water pollution, and health hazards linked to mining operations.

# Create and protect healthy watersheds

## Fiscal year 2026 budget recommendations

### Cooperative Watershed Management Program

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Reclamation

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**

\$10 million

### Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Program

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Reclamation

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**

\$15 million

### Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance

**AGENCY:** National Park Service

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**

\$13.5 million

### WaterSMART

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Reclamation

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**

\$65 million

### Wild and Scenic Rivers

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land  
Management

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**

\$7.5 million for Wild and Scenic  
Rivers (BLM) and \$5.7 million  
for Partnership Wild and Scenic  
Rivers (NPS)

**W**ater is an invaluable resource, essential to life and the very fabric of our ecosystems. Healthy watersheds—including rivers, wetlands, streams, tributaries, floodplains, and estuaries—serve as critical natural systems that enhance resilience to extreme weather events. The United States has 2,110 watersheds. The largest watershed, the Mississippi River Watershed, drains into 31 states and two Canadian provinces. These vital landscapes provide flood mitigation, support aquifer recharge, offer habitats for wildlife, and deliver essential benefits to water supply and water quality. As changes in climate accelerate the frequency and severity of both floods, fires, and droughts, the importance of maintaining robust, functioning watersheds becomes ever more apparent for the communities, economies, and wildlife that rely on them.



LAKE MEAD, NEVADA  
COLLEEN MINIUK

## Priority watersheds

Healthy rivers and watersheds play a pivotal role in safeguarding water quality and providing critical habitats for diverse species. Watershed restoration projects are essential in prioritizing the protection of streamside areas and wetlands, promoting land stewardship, and mitigating the risk of wildfires. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees 12 Geographic Programs, including the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, all of which assist communities in preserving local watersheds. Additionally, the Bureau of Reclamation directs funding through its WaterSMART program, which addresses significant water management challenges in the western United States.

# Enhance flood-management strategies

**A**s floods grow increasingly frequent and severe, Congress must invest in understanding both the rising flood risks and the response capabilities of affected communities. According to the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency will need a minimum of \$800 million annually—totaling between \$3 billion and \$12 billion over time—to enhance flood mapping efforts nationwide and assess future flood risks exacerbated by extreme weather. Congress should prioritize funding for nature-based solutions—such as wetlands restoration, reconnected floodplains, natural floodways, and the preservation of native vegetation. These approaches offer a more sustainable, cost-effective, and reliable alternative to traditional, engineered flood control measures by working with rather than against the natural dynamics of rivers and ecosystems. By investing in these innovative approaches, we can build greater resilience to flooding—safeguarding communities while reducing economic costs.



ALTON, ILLINOIS  
ANDREW DOBSON

## Nature-based solutions

For over a decade, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Engineering with Nature (EWN) program has championed more affordable, effective, and sustainable approaches to infrastructure development, integrating economic, social, and environmental benefits into project design and implementation. One notable example is the Deer Island Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project (AERP) to restore the island and create long-term beneficial use capacity for the nearby Biloxi Harbor Navigation Project. Today, restored portions of the island provide large colonies of least terns and black skimmers with a sizable increase in nesting and foraging habitat; the restoration also protects valuable foraging and nesting habitat for bald eagles and osprey.

## Fiscal year 2026 budget recommendations

### Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$2 billion

### Engineering With Nature

**AGENCY:** US Army Corps of Engineers

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$40 million

### Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$175 million

### Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis (RiskMAP)

**AGENCY:** Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$313 million

### Flood Plain Management and Flooding Mapping

**AGENCY:** Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$225 million

### National Flood Risk Management Program

**AGENCY:** US Army Corps of Engineers

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$6.5 million



# Rehabilitate, retrofit, or remove dangerous dams

## Fiscal year 2026 budget recommendations

### Community-based Restoration Program

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**  
\$56 million

### High Hazard Potential Dam Safety Grant Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**  
\$20 million

### National Dam Safety Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Emergency Management Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**  
\$14 million

### National Fish Passage Program

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**  
\$18.6 million

### Watershed Rehabilitation Program

**AGENCY:** US Department of Agriculture

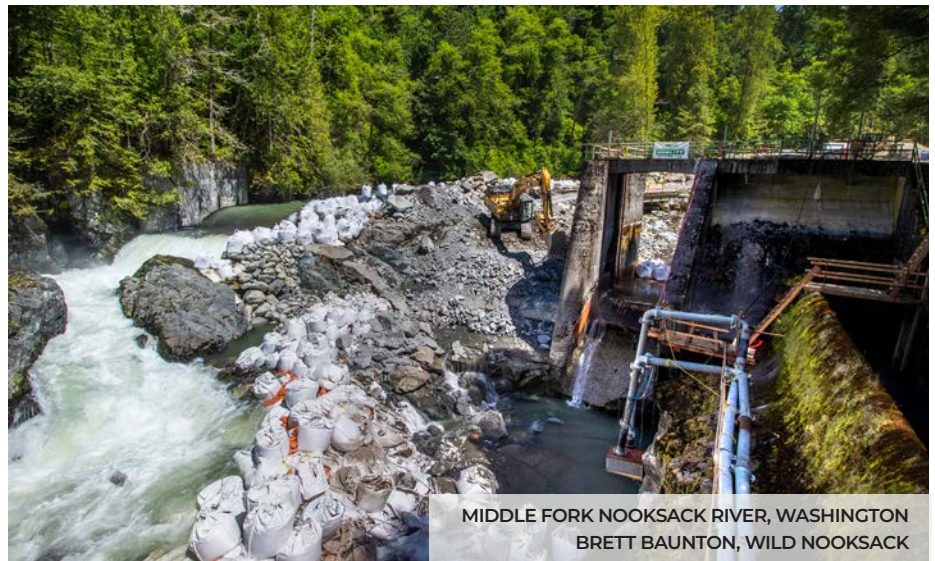
**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**  
\$10 million

### Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Agency

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:**  
\$75 million

Updated dams inflict significant stress and harm on river ecosystems, disrupting natural processes and often causing severe declines in native fish populations and wildlife while no longer providing the services for which they were built. To date, nearly 17,000 dams in the United States are considered to be in aging or poor condition. This accounts for about one in five of the nation's dams. These dams are often classified as being in "high hazard" or "significant hazard" condition, meaning their failure would likely result in significant property damage or loss of life. Congress can join the ongoing momentum behind these restoration projects, healing damaged ecosystems while contributing to broader goals of water and energy security.



MIDDLE FORK NOOKSACK RIVER, WASHINGTON  
BRETT BAUNTON, WILD NOOKSACK

## Facilitating fish passage

The NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program has long been a critical source of funding for projects aimed at ensuring fish passage and providing high-quality habitats for aquatic species. Since its inception in 1996, the program has supported over 2,200 initiatives, restoring more than 4,300 stream miles to facilitate the migration of fish and the recovery of vital aquatic ecosystems.

A particularly noteworthy project is the proposed removal of the Cypress Branch Dam on the tributary of the Chester River in Maryland which would restore 18 mainstem and river miles of spawning habitat for blue back herring and alewife. This initiative is part of a broader partnership effort through NFWF and USFWS.

# Support river-friendly agriculture

**A**griculture holds significant potential for improving resilience on farms. By embracing river-friendly practices and cutting-edge technologies, we can accelerate both the pace and scale of innovation, empowering farmers, ranchers, landowners, and researchers to develop impactful solutions through strengthened state-federal partnerships.

For this vision to fully flourish, Congress must prioritize support for those on the frontlines—farmers who need improved access to voluntary conservation initiatives, better data, and technical assistance to combat nutrient pollution, enhance water quality, and foster healthier soils.



COLORADO RIVER, COLORADO  
JOSH DUPLCHAIN

## Locally-led flood mitigation and recovery projects

The USDA's Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program provides both technical and financial assistance to local communities confronting immediate threats to life, property, and infrastructure from floods, wildfires, windstorms, and natural disasters that disrupt watersheds. In response to Hurricane Helene, the EWP program provided ongoing recovery efforts in Western North Carolina. EWP projects encompass the removal of debris from stream channels, reshaping and stabilization of eroded banks, repair of levees and other critical infrastructure, and acquisition of floodplain easements. These efforts are designed to enhance ecological functions of wetlands, thereby safeguarding water quality, reducing flood risks, and ensuring the long-term resilience of vital infrastructure in vulnerable communities.

## Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Recommendations

### Agricultural Conservation Easement

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$1.050 billion

### Conservation Stewardship Program

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$2.5 billion

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$5.475 billion

### Regional Conservation Partnership Program

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$2.7 billion

### Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program – Subsidies and Grants

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$497 million

### Watershed And Flood Prevention Operations Program

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

**FY26 RECOMMENDATION:** \$ 51.25 million





**AMERICAN  
RIVERS**  
**ACTION FUND**

American Rivers and its affiliated American Rivers Action Fund are championing a national effort to protect and restore all rivers, from remote mountain streams to urban waterways. Healthy rivers provide people and nature with clean, abundant water and natural habitat. For 50 years, American Rivers staff, supporters, and partners have shared a common belief: Life Depends on Rivers.<sup>s</sup> [AmericanRiversActionFund.org](https://AmericanRiversActionFund.org)

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## River Budget: National Priorities for Healthy Rivers and Clean Water in Fiscal Year 2026 (Oct. 2025 to Sept. 2026)

Agency	Program	FY23	FY24	FY25 (Senate)	FY26 Recommendation	About the program
<i>(Thousands of Dollars)</i>						
<b>Interior, Environment and Related Agencies</b>						

### Bureau of Land Management

Wild and Scenic Rivers	\$4,000	Not specified	Not specified	\$7,500	Preserves rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values
Aquatic Resources Program	\$58,247	\$55,917	\$57,893	\$60,000	Protects and restores riparian and wetland areas, aquatic habitats, and water resources to provide functioning ecosystems
Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E) Program	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$34,000	Carries out recovery of species listed under the Endangered Species Act with habitat managed by the Bureau of Land Management, including aquatic species

### Environmental Protection Agency

Chesapeake Bay Program	\$92,000	\$92,000	\$92,500	\$92,000	Restores and protects water quality and ecological integrity in the Chesapeake Bay
Clean Water SRF	\$1,688,847	\$1,638,861	\$1,638,861	\$4,890,000	Provides federal financial assistance to states to protect the nation's water resources
Drinking Water SRF	\$1,176,095	\$1,126,101	\$2,764,962	\$4,380,000	Provides federal financial assistance to states to protect the nation's water resources
Environmental Justice Programs	\$109,340	\$102,159	\$100,000	\$109,340	Advances environmental justices initiatives for states, localities and tribes.
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	\$368,000	\$368,000	\$371,000	\$475,000	Restores and protects water quality and ecological integrity in the Great Lakes
Indian Reservation Drinking Water Program	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$50,000	Connect, expands, or repairs existing public water systems on Indian reservations
Low Income Household Water Assistance Program Pilot	-	-	-	\$180,000	Implements a water and sewer assistance pilot program
National Non-Point Source Management Program	\$182,000	\$174,500	\$175,500	\$200,000	Implements nonpoint source management programs and projects as selected by the state
Puget Sound Program	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$57,000	\$57,000	Restores and protects water quality and ecological integrity in the Puget Sound
Reducing Lead in Drinking Water	\$25,011	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$100,000	Reduces the concentration of lead in drinking water
Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program	\$50,000	\$41,000	\$41,000	\$280,000	Manages combined sewer overflows, sanitary sewer overflows, and stormwater flows
Assistance for Small & Disadvantaged Communities Drinking Water	\$30,158	\$28,500	\$28,500	\$140,000	Provides water infrastructure assistance to underserved communities
Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Fund	\$75,640	\$72,274	\$72,378	\$73,000	Provides supplemental credit assistance to significant water infrastructure projects
Water Pollution Control (Sec 106) grant program	\$237,000	\$225,685	\$225,685	\$275,100	Provides grants to states and tribes to implement TMDL's, WQ standards, NPDES permits, etc.
Wetlands Program Development Grants	\$14,692	\$14,104	\$22,000	\$30,000	Supports development of state and tribal wetland programs



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(Thousands of Dollars)						
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies (Continued)						

### Forest Service

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species (TES) Program	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	Carries out recovery of species listed under the Endangered Species Act with habitat in the National Forest System, including aquatic species
Legacy Roads and Trails (LRT) Program	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	Stormproofs stream crossings and fixes culverts that are necessary for fish passage in national forests

### Fish and Wildlife Service

Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund	\$11,500	\$11,500	\$11,500	\$17,000	Increases resources for the conservation of the nation’s fish, wildlife, plants and habitats
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	\$7,032	\$5,500	\$6,100	\$15,000	Increases resources for the conservation of the nation’s fish, wildlife, plants and habitats
National Fish Habitat Action Plan	\$7,164	\$7,164	Not specified	\$7,200	Conserves freshwater, estuarine and marine waterways and fisheries
National Fish Passage Program	\$18,598	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$18,598	Restores rivers and conserves aquatic resources by removing or bypassing barriers
National Wetlands Inventory	\$3,471	\$3,471	\$3,545	\$7,471	Provides detailed information and data on US wetlands
National Wildlife Refuge System	\$541,555	\$527,035	\$543,505	\$602,331	Conserves public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's fish, wildlife, and plants
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	\$50,000	\$49,000	\$49,000	\$60,000	Protects wetland habitats for fish and wildlife
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program	\$60,267	\$59,000	\$63,836	\$75,000	Assists landowners interested in restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat on their land

### Indian Health Service

Sanitation Facilities Construction	\$196,167	\$123,650	\$145,171	\$145,171	Provides American Indian and Alaska Natives with essential water and sewer infrastructure
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### National Park Service

Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program	\$5,300	\$5,300	\$5,300	\$5,648	Protects outstanding rivers and river-related resources through a collaborative approach
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,470	\$13,470	Assits communities with conservation and outdoor recreation

### U.S. Geological Survey

Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program	\$114,558	\$109,976	\$114,390	\$114,390	A national network of streamgages, wells and other monitoring sites
National Water Quality Program	\$100,080	\$96,000	\$97,786	\$97,786	Provides an understanding of water-quality conditions and what affects those conditions



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(Thousands of Dollars)						
Energy & Water Development						

**Bureau of Reclamation**

	Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Program	\$5,000	\$6,500	\$15,000	\$15,000	Implements voluntary ecosystem restoration projects, including fish passage and aging infrastructure upgrades
	Cooperative Watershed Management Program	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$20,000	Supports watershed management planning and projects to improve water reliability
	Central Valley Project Restoration Fund	\$45,770	\$48,508	\$55,656	\$55,656	Funds habitat restoration, improvement and acquisition, and other fish and wildlife restoration activities
	Columbia and Snake River Salmon Recovery Project	\$13,329	\$13,279	\$18,769	\$18,769	Delivers habitat projects for salmon recovery supported by science and local communities
	Dam Safety Program	\$210,218	\$209,813	\$213,214	\$213,214	Ensures Reclamation dams do not present unreasonable risk to people, property, and the environment
	Klamath Project	\$34,842	\$46,642	\$35,342	\$35,342	Provides funding to improve water supplies in the Klamath River Basin
	Lower Colorado River Operations Program	\$46,804	\$48,999	\$49,136	\$49,136	Implements the Drought Contingency Plan and the Lower Colorado Multi-species Conservation Program
	San Joaquin River Restoration	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$20,500	Restores and maintain fish populations in "good condition" in the main stem of the San Joaquin River
	WaterSMART	\$65,000	\$54,000	\$65,000	\$65,128	Supports benefits to increase the reliability of water and funds the Environmental Water Resources Project and the Planning and Project Design grants
	Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project	\$50,254	\$38,044	\$49,230	\$49,230	Enhances streamflows and fish passage for anadromous fish in the Yakima River Basin

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

	Engineering with Nature	\$20,000	\$10,500	\$24,000	\$40,000	Aligns natural and engineering processes to deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits
	Flood Plain Management Services	\$20,000	\$0	\$16,500	\$16,500	Provides general technical assistance and data for flood plain management efforts
	National Flood Risk Management Program	\$6,400	\$0	\$6,500	\$6,500	Focuses the policies, programs and expertise of USACE toward reducing overall flood risk
	Section 1135–Project Modification for Improvement of the Environment	\$10,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	Allows the USACE to take on projects that improve the environment in the public interest
	Section 206-Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration	\$13,000	\$6,500	\$16,000	\$16,000	Allows the USACE to take on small-scale projects to restore aquatic habitat
	Sustainable Rivers Program	\$7,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	Reduces negative environmental consequences of downstream flows at USACE reservoirs
	Upper Mississippi River Restoration, IL, IA, MN, MO, WI	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	Ensures the viability and vitality of Upper Mississippi River fish and wildlife



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(Thousands of Dollars)					
Commerce, Justice, Science					

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Community Based Restoration Program <sup>1</sup>	\$56,684	\$56,184	\$56,184	\$56,184	Assists the implementation of community-driven habitat restoration
National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund	\$34,000	\$33,500	\$34,000	\$34,000	Enhances the resilience of coastal communities using natural ecosystems
Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$70,000	\$70,000	Protects, restores, and conserves Pacific salmon and steelhead

1. The Community Based Restoration Program is funded through 'Fisheries Habitat Restoration'

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program	\$416,000	-	-	\$1,050,000	Protects, restores, and enhances wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches
Conservation Stewardship Program	\$922,000	-	-	\$2,500,000	Provides incentives for conservation performance
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$1,879,000	-	-	\$5,475,000	Assists agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits
Regional Conservation Partnership Program	\$283,000	-	-	\$2,700,000	Provides assistance to producers through partnership conservation program contracts
Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program - Subsidies and Grants	\$596,404	\$595,972	\$496,490	\$496,716	Improves water and waste treatment facilities for distressed rural communities
Watershed And Flood Prevention Operations Program	\$75,000	\$35,000	\$51,255	\$51,255	Provides expenses to carry out the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act
Watershed Rehabilitation Program	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$10,000	Addresses public health, safety concerns, and environmental impacts of aging dams



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(Thousands of Dollars)						
Homeland Security						

Federal Emergency Management Agency

	Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities	\$75,000	-	\$1,343,520	\$2,000,000	Implements climate resilience projects that reduce future risks from natural disasters
	Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis Program (RiskMAP)	\$312,750	\$281,475	\$312,750	\$312,750	Allows FEMA to continue ongoing RiskMAP projects and expand coverage of flood hazard information
	Flood Mitigation Assistance	\$700,000	-	\$175,000	\$175,000	Provides grants to reduce the risk of flood damage to existing buildings and infrastructure
	Floodplain Management and Mapping	\$206,500	\$221,066	\$225,207	\$225,207	Improves floodplain management, develops flood hazard zone maps, and educates on the risk of floods
	Hazard Mitigation Revolving Loan Fund (STORM Act)	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	Provides needed and sustainable funding for hazard mitigation projects
	High Hazard Potential Dam Safety Grants	-	-	-	\$20,000	Provides grants for rehabilitation of eligible high hazard potential dams
	National Dam Safety Program	\$9,657	\$9,957	\$9,200	\$13,900	Reduces the risks to human life, property, and the environment from dam related hazards