Senate Committee advances space and coastal community bills

August 1, 2018

On August 1, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation amended and advanced several bills to the Senate calendar. Among these bills were the Space Frontier Act (S. 3277), the Waterfront Community Revitalization and Resiliency Act (S. 3265), and the COASTAL Implementation Act (S.2242).

The Space Frontier Act was introduced by Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and co-sponsored by Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Edward Markey (D-MA). The bill seeks to enable commercial space activities by streamlining processes such as applications and safety approvals for a commercial space launch. Under this legislation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) would also create an accessible and searchable list of all NASA assets, services, and capabilities that are available for public-private partnerships.

The Waterfront Community Revitalization and Resiliency Act, introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), invites waterfront communities to self-nominate themselves as “resilient waterfront communities” and create voluntary plans for improving their resiliency and vitality. To participate in the ten-year program, a waterfront community must have an eligible resilient waterfront community plan approved by the Secretary of Commerce. Plans must include consideration for economic opportunities, ecosystem challenges, sustainable infrastructure maintenance, and health and societal impacts. Under its existing authorities, the Commerce Department would provide support for the enactment of community plans and create a network of resilient waterfront communities to facilitate the sharing of best practices.

The COASTAL Implementation Act introduced by Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) would extend the deadline for the development of the Named Storm Event Model for assessing water- and wind-related damage from coastal storms. The act would require the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to establish this model by June 1, 2019, and to seek public input before the Named Storm Event Model, or any modification of to this model, may take effect. The bill also allows the Administrator to deploy additional sensors for data collection in areas determined to be at higher risk of experiencing potentially devastating storms.

Sources: Library of Congress; U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.