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## NEWS

### Senate passes bipartisan WRDA

The Senate on Aug. 1 unanimously passed the Thomas R. Carper Water Resource Development Act of 2024 (WRDA), which authorizes navigation and ecosystem restoration projects for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works had unanimously advanced the bill on May 22.

A summary of the bill is available [here](#).

In a press release following passage of the bill, NGFA thanked EPW Committee Chairman Tom Carper, D-Del., and Ranking Member Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., along with Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee Chairman Mark Kelly, D-Ariz., and Ranking Member Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., for their dedication to maintaining waterways infrastructure legislation on a biennial, bipartisan basis.

“This bill authorizes feasibility studies and new or modified construction projects and directs the Corps to expedite the completion of several ongoing studies and projects from past WRDAs. Importantly, the bill permanently increases the federal cost-share for inland waterway projects to 75 percent, with the remaining 25 percent from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (adjusted from 65/35). Additionally, it provides full federal funding for projects financed through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA),” NGFA stated.

“The U.S. inland waterways system is crucial to the operations of NGFA-member companies and the agricultural supply chain, with barges transporting about half of all grains to

export grain elevators. Efficient inland locks and dams and modern ports are vital to maintaining America's comparative infrastructure advantage.”

The U.S. House of Representatives passed its version of the WRDA on July 22. Next, the EPW Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee must begin the conference process to reconcile the differences between the two bills. Importantly, neither bill includes any language that would threaten the Lower Snake River Dams.

## **NGFA, ag groups, spotlight rail capacity concerns in Mexico**

NGFA and members of the Agricultural Transportation Working Group called on U.S. federal officials to address rail service capacity issues in Mexico that are hindering U.S. agricultural trade.

Demand for rail service coupled with insufficient investment in rail infrastructure has led to embargoes, congestion, and slowed servicing of U.S. agricultural products by Ferromex, a main rail carrier in Mexico, the groups said in a July 31 letter to Surface Transportation Board Chairman Robert Primus, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai.

Agricultural shippers have encountered rail service constraints with Ferromex for almost a year due to the rail line's need for rationing and the relatively lower rates for agricultural products, the groups noted.

“We urge you to speak with your colleagues in Mexico to encourage increased investment in the country's rail network and to ensure U.S. agricultural products do not disproportionately bear the burden of rail service constraints,” the letter states.

Mexico is the largest export market for U.S. agricultural products with over \$30 billion in U.S. agricultural products exported to Mexico in the past year.

“As our most natural trading partner, Mexico is a critical stakeholder for the U.S. agricultural supply chain,” the groups said. “However, the United States' proximity advantage over agricultural competitors like Brazil and Russia is reduced by the rail capacity problem, leading to higher exports into Mexico from these competitors.”

## **NGFA comments on OSHA emergency response worker proposal**

NGFA joined a coalition of employers in [comments submitted](#) to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) outlining concerns about the agency's proposal to update existing regulations for firefighters and other emergency responders.

As noted in the comments submitted on July 22, this rule could impact rural grain handling facilities as many of them depend on volunteer services as first responders and their employees often participate in the volunteer units.

OSHA says the focus of the proposed rule is to provide workplace protections for workers who respond to emergencies as part of their regularly assigned duties and would expand the scope of protected workers to include emergency medical service and technical search and rescue.

The proposed rule would replace OSHA's existing Fire Brigades standard and would require written emergency response plans, hazard vulnerability assessments, training, personal protective equipment, medical screening and behavioral health services, and other requirements. Further, the proposal would incorporate several voluntary consensus standards from the National Fire Protection Association. One

problem is that the drafters of such so-called “voluntary” standards do not calculate their economic burdens.

The coalition’s comments, led by Conn Maciel Carey LLP, describe several issues with the proposal, including how it duplicates existing OSHA standards, adds administrative burdens that will not enhance safety, includes vague compliance requirements, and compounds costs for agribusinesses.

NGFA participated in the proposed rule’s [Small Business Advocacy Review panel](#) in 2021 to emphasize that it would place an undue regulatory burden on grain handling facilities in both costs and additional paperwork. Some examples include: 1) additional paperwork burdens related to pre-incident planning; 2) responder preparedness e.g., training and certification and facility; and 3) equipment preparedness, to name a few.

OSHA [published](#) the proposed rule on Feb. 5. Currently, the agency has received more than 2,500 comments after extending the initial public comment period from May 6 to June 21 and then until July 22. The agency also scheduled an informal virtual hearing on the proposed rule for Nov. 12, 2024.

## Cybersecurity group publishes guide for small and medium companies

The Food and Agriculture - Information Sharing and Analysis Center ([Food and Ag-ISAC](#)) has published a [cybersecurity guide](#) detailing cost-effective safety steps for small and medium-sized companies.

“Given the interconnected nature of the industry, it is important that companies of all sizes take appropriate steps to secure their technology environments,” the guide notes. “While cybersecurity is often viewed as an issue for ‘big companies,’ small and medium-sized businesses tend to be at a greater risk since they often lack the resources and expertise to effectively mitigate cyber threats. Because of this, small and medium-sized businesses are often targeted by threatening adversaries”

The guide highlights the following low-cost practices to reduce the likelihood of a successful cyberattack and enhance recovery capabilities:

1. Update your software
2. Use unique passwords
3. Deploy Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)
4. Back up files
5. Encrypt sensitive files
6. Segment your networks
7. Do not fall for “phishing” emails
8. Do not connect to public wi-fi networks
9. Develop and test a response plan
10. Engage with your peers

Access the guide here: [Food and Ag Cybersecurity: A Guide for Small & Medium Enterprises](#).

NGFA announced on May 30 its participation in the Food and Ag-ISAC as an industry partner. Food and Ag-ISAC provides weekly threat reports to association partners, threat briefings, and cybersecurity thought leadership. View more information at [foodandag-isac.org](http://foodandag-isac.org) and on [ngfa.org/cybersecurity](http://ngfa.org/cybersecurity).

## EVENTS

### OSHA's Safe + Sound Week is Aug. 12-18

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is hosting its [Safe + Sound Week](#) on Aug. 12-18. Registration is available at [osha.gov/safeandsoundweek](https://osha.gov/safeandsoundweek).

Safe + Sound Week is a nationwide event held each August. This year the event will provide resources for businesses on job hazard analysis. More than 3,900 participated in Safe + Sound Week in 2023. OSHA's [Plan & Promote Your Participation](#) webpage includes activity ideas as well as graphics and other materials.

### Foundation and NGFA host Harvest Safety Week - Aug. 19-23

NGFA's fifth annual Harvest Safety Week is Aug. 19-23! Each year at the end of August, NGFA dedicates a week to sharing safety resources particularly relevant to the busy harvest season.

This year's theme encourages members to "Participate, Prepare, Protect," by participating in sharing Harvest Safety Week resources, preparing for hazards during the harvest season and protecting the employees that "transform America's harvest" into food, fuel and fiber.

Harvest Safety Week is made possible by NGFA and the [National Grain and Feed Foundation](#). Thanks to the support of the Foundation, billboards and radio ads highlighting Harvest Safety Week 2024 will be displayed in several regions.

**Fundraising:** As the NGFA and the Foundation encourage members to "Participate, Prepare, Protect," they also ask them to GIVE. The Foundation's public safety efforts would not be possible without the generosity of NGFA members, member companies and passionate donors. This is an excellent chance to showcase a commitment to promoting safety and health in the workplace. Go to [ngfa.org/foundation](https://ngfa.org/foundation).

Harvest Safety Week 2024 resources will include:

- New safety training videos designed to be easily watched in a couple of minutes and based on NGFA Safety Tips Sheets available on [ngfa.org/safety](https://ngfa.org/safety).
- A live webinar with People Spark Consulting on employee onboarding on Aug. 20
- A recorded video presentation with M&M Specialty Services on grain quality management



Members and non-members can sign up to receive NGFA's Harvest Safety Week emails [here](#). Those already receiving NGFA emails will also receive Harvest Safety Week materials.

## Register for FSMA preventive controls training on Aug. 27-29

NGFA is partnering with Kansas State University to conduct another Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) preventive controls for animal food training on Aug. 27-29 in Manhattan, Kan.

The course delivers the Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance curriculum recognized by the Food and Drug Administration as being adequate for training individuals who are responsible for developing and overseeing required animal food safety plans. The course also delivers accredited training on the application of hazard analysis and critical control point (HAACP) principles.

More information about the course and registration details are available at [ngfa.org/feed-events-training/](https://ngfa.org/feed-events-training/).

## CEC 2024 trade show registration is open

NGFA-member companies interested in exhibiting at NGFA's 53<sup>rd</sup> annual Country Elevator Conference and Trade Show (CEC) on Dec. 10-12 in Kansas City, Mo., can register at [ngfa.org/cec](https://ngfa.org/cec).

- Attendee registration opens on Sept. 10.
- NGFA is accepting **sponsors** for CEC. Contact NGFA Vice President, Marketing and Member Services, [Rebecca Grubbs, for more information](#).
- NGFA is holding an **open call for speakers** from NGFA-member companies to headline CEC breakouts and general sessions. Contact NGFA Vice President, Marketing and Member Services, [Rebecca Grubbs, for more information](#).



NGFA's flagship meeting for grain merchants, elevator operators, feed manufacturers, processors, and grain industry suppliers attracts several hundred industry members each year for networking, education and the supplier trade show. Programming at CEC is designed to prepare, teach and inspire attendees.

## SUPPLEMENTS

### Extra Supplements

NPR: [Bird flu cases among farm workers may be going undetected, a study suggests](#)

Reuters: [US to spend \\$10 million to curb bird flu in farm workers, including vaccine push](#)

Agri-Pulse: [Court vacates, remands EPA small refinery exemption denials](#)

Politico: [Harris tries to get out early on immigration](#)

Bloomberg: [Michigan Farmers Who Say Yes to Solar Face Neighbors' Wrath](#) (*log in*)

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