

McBride, Coons and Blunt Rochester push to restore Sussex County flood study

- Brandon Ferguson
- Published May 30, 2026 at 6:00 am
-



Flooding from the Indian River Bay has already started on South Inlet Road by the Indian River Inlet Bridge.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Email
- Print
- Copy article link
- Save

Delaware's congressional delegation is calling on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to reinstate a canceled flood mitigation study focused on Sussex County and other vulnerable coastal areas.

U.S. Rep. Sarah McBride and U.S. Sens. Chris Coons and Lisa Blunt Rochester sent a letter to the Army Corps demanding the restoration of the Coastal Storm Risk Management Study of the Delaware Inland Bays and Delaware Bay Coast, also known as the Back Bay Study.

The study was authorized by Congress to examine storm risk management challenges in Delaware and identify ways to reduce flooding and strengthen coastal resilience. Lawmakers said the study is especially important in Sussex County, where communities face risks from storm surge, recurrent flooding, extreme high tides, power outages and rising sea levels.

According to the lawmakers, the Army Corps recently notified them that the study had been terminated. They said the agency did not provide the legally required 30-day notice to Congress before canceling the study.

In their letter, McBride, Coons and Blunt Rochester said ending the study would leave Delaware communities without critical information needed to

strengthen infrastructure, protect public safety and support local economies connected to beaches, bays and waterways.

The lawmakers also said flooding and saltwater intrusion threaten Delaware farmland. They noted that agriculture is the state's largest land use, with more than 2,300 family farms contributing billions of dollars in economic activity.

The study began in November 2022 and was paused in July 2023 to adjust its scope. It resumed in May 2024 after work between the Army Corps and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

According to the letter, the Army Corps said the study was terminated because the study team was unable to “develop a scope and budget that is compliant.”

The lawmakers are requesting a meeting with Army Corps leadership to discuss why the study was canceled and how it could be resumed or restructured. They are also asking for the study to be restored and for a written response and briefing by June 1.

Get WDEL's top stories sent right to your email. [Click here](#) to signup for WDEL's Afternoon Edition.

And get breaking news notifications sent right to your mobile device. [Click here](#) to download the WDEL app - which gives you easy on-the-go access to WDEL's stream.