



washington dc update

July 6, 2015

DC Updates/Congress Returns to Work

Perhaps not everyone is interested in the fact that the Congress returns to work tomorrow following their Fourth of July recess. But WESTCAS members should be because the Congress, along with the other two branches of government, has important work to do in a number of areas including issues that impact the Arid West. Hopefully a productive July will allow the Congress to begin their nearly six week long summer recess which is scheduled to begin on July 30 and last until September 8. Here are a few issues of particular interest and concern to WESTCAS:

FY16 Appropriations Bills

Both the House and Senate will return to consideration of Appropriations bills such as Energy and Water Development and Interior and Environment fund key aspects of the Federal government including the USEPA, the Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation. This includes both funding levels and "Appropriations Riders" that will impact the impact implementation of the WOTUS Rule and the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard. Appropriations bills are moving faster than they have in the past so July could see important progress in the process.

WOTUS

WESTCAS President Kelly Collins circulated the attached which is the complaint filed by agencies of the State of Texas against USEPA and the WOTUS Rule. The agencies include the Texas Water Development Board, the Texas Council on Environmental Quality, the Texas Railroad Commission, the Texas Department of Transportation, the Texas Department of Agriculture, and the Texas

Land Office. The complaint was filed in the Southern District of Texas that has not been supportive of other Obama Administration policies. There can be no doubt that the Texas agencies "have standing" with regard to WOTUS so well worth special attention from the WESTCAS membership.

Congressman Jared Huffman's Legislative Ideas to Address Drought

WESTCAS Vice President Mike Eytel shared the two attached documents that provide both a draft of drought related legislation being circulated by Congressman Jared Huffman of California and a "Fact Sheet" on what he is trying to accomplish. Mr. Huffman serves as the Ranking Democrat on the House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee of the Natural Resources Committee and also serves on the Water and Environment Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. You can get a better idea of the breadth of his ideas that cover agencies ranging from USEPA, to the Corps of Engineers, and the Bureau of Reclamation and ideas that could be helpful to the Arid West. Mr. Huffman's contribution is just the latest in a series of bills that have sought the right balance in how the Federal government can best help to address severe drought. Thanks Mike, for sharing this information with the WESTCAS membership.

This should be an intense month in the political/policy process. Thanks to its recent annual conference in San Diego and the meeting of its Board of Directors, WESTCAS is well-positioned to play a role in helping to shape these policies.

