

# Hicks-Ray Associates



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Fred B. Hicks and Tom Ray

SUBJECT: Senate EPW Committee Releases WRDA Draft

Late Friday, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works released a 284 page draft of a Water Resources Development Act Reauthorization bill. We have attached the draft for your review and information. It will be the subject of a number of HRA reports as we delve into various sections of the draft.

The Senate EPW Committee could mark up this measure as early as Wednesday. It is also significant that the draft has the unanimous support of Committee Republicans as well as Democrats. Most believe that the actions in the Senate will also spur the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to begin work on its version of a WRDA reauthorization bill.

Key provisions in the Senate bill include:

- A 35 page section which establishes a protocol for accelerating projects as they move through the NEPA process.
- A multi-million dollar water infrastructure financing program which would allow the Corps of Engineers and USEPA to cooperate on spending for water and wastewater projects.

And these are only two of the dozens of sections in the Senate draft.

It is important to note that this is only the first significant step in a WRDA reauthorization. Environmentalists don't like many provisions of the Senate draft, especially those that could accelerate water projects. There are no earmarks at present and traditionally it has been earmarks that have driven WRDA bills over the finish line. This was apparent during the last WRDA in 2007 when the bill increased in size to \$23 billion by adding earmarks which in turn allowed the Congress to overwhelmingly override the veto of President Bush.

Please watch your in-box as HRA examines various sections of the Senate WRDA draft for their relevance to WESTCAS members.

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Fred Hicks - 703.866.4290  
P.O. Box 2115  
Springfield, VA 22152-0115  
[fred@hicks-ray.com](mailto:fred@hicks-ray.com)

Tom Ray - 254.855.0880  
P.O. Box 955  
Waco, TX 76703-0955  
[tom@hicks-ray.com](mailto:tom@hicks-ray.com)