



washington dc update

July 27, 2012

More on This Week's House Transportation and Infrastructure Hearing on Clean Water Act Issues Updates

On Wednesday, July 25, the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the House T&I Committee held a hearing titled, "Integrated Planning and Permitting, Part 2: An Opportunity for EPA to Provide Communities With Flexibility to Make Smart Investments in Water Quality."

One of the themes of the hearing was the huge amounts of investment that communities are going to have to make to meet Federal Clean Water Act requirements. The Mayor of Salt Lake City offered an interesting perspective:

"Salt Lake City is currently facing CWA requirements on the Great Salt Lake, Utah's signature water body.....Initial cost estimates for meeting these regulations are staggering.....Depending upon final regulatory limits, the state estimates over \$1.3 billion will be required of taxpayers statewide to address nutrients along, with rate increases up to \$500 annually per household."

The head of the Washington DC Water and Sewer Commission also offered his perspective:

"DC Water is proud of our achievements to date in reducing nutrients discharged from our facility to the Chesapeake Bay. However, as permit requirements imposed on point sources like Blue Plains become more stringent, it is important to recognize the diminishing return on investment large capital projects such as the Enhanced Nutrient Removal Project provide. Prior permits issued by EPA reduced nitrogen from Blue Plains by 58 percent at a cost of approximately \$15 per pound of nitrogen reduced. Our new permit requires a 31 percent nitrogen reduction at a cost of approximate \$476 per pound of nitrogen produced."

WESTCAS members have their own extensive data bases on cost/benefit issues. The DC Fly-In gave us the ability to work directly with the Subcommittee of jurisdiction on the T&I Committee. We think it would be a good idea for WESTCAS to provide follow-up information for this hearing that is specific to the Arid West. This would be an effective way to enhance our relationship with key Members and staff.

Summary & Take-Away .

This is the second report on the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee of the House T&I Committee's Hearing on "Integrated Permitting".

The themes of this Hearing are important to WESTCAS members and were part of our DC Fly-in last April. Local governments are making huge investments in complying with the CWA and other federal regulations. Those presenting testified to the cost.

WESTCAS has an opportunity to follow-up on the Hearing and provide its input and perspectives to the Subcommittee.

