

Hicks-Ray Associates



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Fred B. Hicks and Tom Ray

SUBJECT: Roundup and Review of Pending Issues as the Congressional Recess Begins

Congress began its summer recess last Friday. They won't come back into session until 5 weeks from today. Of the 93 days until November 6, Congress will be in session for only 16 days. Obviously not much is going to happen and not much can happen during this period.

As we approach the dog days of summer, it would be easy to assume that this "do-nothing" condition of the Federal government will persist. When one is in the midst of inaction, it takes a certain effort to believe that this will be replaced by furious activity in the near future. Sort of like the period of history between October, 1939 and April 1940 during World War II. These months were known as the "sitzkrieg" or "sitting war" because so little happened after the surrender of Poland. But the sitzkrieg lasted less than seven months and ended with the invasion of Norway followed by the invasion of France and Belgium.

We are not suggesting that the current situation approaches the intensity of a World War. But it would be good for WESTCAS members to remind ourselves during the dog days of August that the current situation will last only slightly more than 90 days. The beginning of the lame duck session of Congress in November will be followed by the convening of a new Congress in January followed by the inauguration of the President. And while all of this is going on the Executive and Legislative Branches of government will be wrestling with some of the thorniest issues that it has ever faced.

It is impossible to know the outcome of what is about to occur. But this is a good moment for groups like WESTCAS to review the current situation and develop possible scenarios for the future. We are not talking about issues such as extending tax cuts or sequestration, but rather those that are directly related to water resources related challenges including new concepts for the Federal government to support water infrastructure, FY13 water resources related Appropriations bills, and extending the outreach of the CWA without the specific guidance of the Congress.

As the voice of water in the Arid West, there is a great opportunity and challenge for WESTCAS to provide input and leadership to help guide these critical issues. Over the next few days we will be sending a series of updates for your consideration.

Fred Hicks - 703.866.4290
P.O. Box 2115
Springfield, VA 22152-0115
fred@hicks-ray.com

Tom Ray - 254.855.0880
P.O. Box 955
Waco, TX 76703-0955
tom@hicks-ray.com