

Hicks-Ray Associates



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TO: WESTCAS Membership
FROM: Fred B. Hicks and Tom Ray
SUBJECT: The Day After Yesterday

All around our great country, some are euphoric. Some are dismayed. Many are wondering what yesterday really means in terms of federal policy. To us, it's pretty simple. The dogs have barked and the caravan has now moved on. The lame duck session begins in less than a week and the new Congress convenes for the first time in less than 60 days.

After nearly four years in office, we have a good idea of the environmental and water resource related policies that will continue to be pursued by the Obama Administration during the President's second term. And now we know that Democrats have retained their majority in the Senate by 55 to 45 and that Republicans have maintained their majority in the House by 234 to 192 with 9 seats still to be decided.

With Republicans in control of the House and with Democrats short of 60 votes in the Senate, it will be difficult for the President to underpin his water related policies through the passage of Congressional legislation. This is at least true if he holds to current Administration policies on issues such as "Waters of the US."

If the legislative path is essentially closed to him, we join with many others in the water community in believing that the President will pursue his agenda increasingly via the issuing of Executive Orders, Guidance, and other directives. These instruments have the full force of law and would be in effect at least until January, 2017.

It is essential that WESTCAS establish its position with regard to the merits of such an approach along with other key issues such as how water infrastructure will be funded and who will control the flow of these funds. It is also important for WESTCAS to continue advocating for regular cycle water resources appropriations in the Energy and Water and the Interior and Environment Appropriations bills.

Earlier this week, Dawn Moore sent you out a worksheet which we put together which we hope will aid you in organizing your thoughts on these critical issues. We hope you have glanced at this document and are ready to go to work.

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