

Hicks-Ray Associates



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Fred B. Hicks and Tom Ray

SUBJECT: DC Updates

There is so much going on at present that it is hard to choose between the various “breaking news” items. However, here are two issues that should be of particular interest to WESTCAS members:

EPA Announces Plans to Develop Regs for Perchlorate and Toxic Chemicals in Drinking Water

Yesterday, EPA announced that it would move to create a national standard for drinking water and also for a number of other VOC contaminants. We have attached the news release that accompanied this announcement. It provides a quick read and also contains links for more information. The decision to regulate perchlorate represents a reversal of a decision reached in 2008 under the Bush Administration not to do so.

The decision on regulation of VOC’s is also important because EPA is proposing to regulate these contaminants in a group instead of individually. EPA believes that this approach will allow utilities to tailor their treatment strategies more effectively and efficiently than if each contaminant were treated as a separate regulation. The announcement yesterday follows on EPA’s new strategy for drinking water which it announced in March, 2010.

FY11 Appropriations

It appears that at least the House of Representatives is planning to proceed with a year-long continuing resolution to address the final seven months remaining in FY11. Action will have to be completed by the time the current CR runs out which is March 4th. Failing that, yet another CR would have to be adopted to give the Congress more time.

Congressional budget hawk, Representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, is the newly appointed chair of the House Budget Committee. He is reportedly preparing a series of proposed budget cuts that would total between \$50 and \$60 billion to be taken out of Federal spending for the remainder of the current fiscal year. But some House

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Republicans are pushing for cuts of \$100 billion or even more during this time period, so these differences of opinion will have to be reconciled before the House can move on its version of a year-long CR.

It should also be remembered that the Senate is by no means required to follow the House action on this matter and is indeed unlikely to agree to some of the heavy reductions that are likely to be a part of any House version of the bill. These cuts will come out of Federal discretionary spending and will not include budgets such as Defense, veteran's affairs, and homeland security, so the feeling is that the remaining programs, including water resources, may be looking at substantial reductions. Stay tuned.