



washington dc update

House Continuing Resolution to Keep Federal Government Open until March 18th

February 28, 2011

On Friday, Chairman Rogers of the House Appropriations Committee introduced a further Continuing Resolution that would keep the Federal government in operation between March 4 and March 18. An additional \$4 billion in cuts have been included in this CR which the House is urging the Senate to accept in order to prevent a government shutdown on Friday.

We have attached a copy of this legislation and also the Appropriations Committee press release of this past Friday for your review. Of great interest to WESTCAS Members is Section 168 of the bill which you can find on page 2 of the attached document:

“Section 168. Any language specifying an earmark in an appropriations Act for fiscal year 2010, or in a committee report or joint explanatory statement accompanying such an Act, shall have no legal effect with respect to funds appropriated by this Act. For purposes of this section, the term ‘earmark’ means a congressional earmark or congressionally directed spending item....”

By far the largest reduction in spending under this CR would be the \$341 million in FY10 spending for the Corps of Engineers Construction Account, along with \$56 million in Investigations and \$38 million from the Bureau of Reclamation.

The bottom line is that if your agency received Federal funding in FY10 and you haven't processed your money yet, this latest version of the House CR may spell real trouble. Of course, the Senate may not go along with this legislation, but House Members are hoping that the prospect of a Federal shut-down after Friday will compel them to do so.

The majority of Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation projects are not the “pets” of Members of Congress but instead represent the requests and the needs of local government including water boards, city councils, county commissions, and the like. These actions shift the power to request funding for water resources projects away from the legislative branch of government and completely to the Executive branch, including OMB. The question that must be addressed is whether this represents “penny-wise and pound foolish” policy.

For more information see the following news release posted on the House Appropriations Committee website at

http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=266

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