



washington dc update

date

DC Updates

One group of apprehensive people in Washington today are those who paid premium prices to attend this afternoon's home opener for the Washington Nationals. It's supposed to be 42 degrees with a near 100% chance of rain as the afternoon wears on. "Take me out to the ballpark."

Another apprehensive group in DC would be those individuals working just a mile north of the ballpark in the US Capitol trying to negotiate a FY11 budget agreement that will keep the Federal government open after next Friday. Those expecting an early resolution need only remember those old silent "Perils of Pauline" movies where the heroine is tied to the train track. Nobody would have bought tickets if Pauline had been rescued while the train was still a mile away. There has to be more "drama" before the issue is resolved. The same will be true with regard to the Federal budget negotiations.

The group that should be most apprehensive of all over what is happening today in Washington are local agencies who have depended upon the Federal government to act as a funding partner for all sorts of infrastructure, including water resources. The fact that these programs have been in operation for generations does not make them immune to the fervor of ignoring 84% of the Federal budget and concentrating cuts in the remaining 16%. Under this scenario, the Congress is much like fruit-pickers who are given a short time to harvest an orchard. Predictably, what happens is that the pickers rush through and pick off all of the low-hanging fruit.

Once this process for FY11 has been completed, which will likely be next week, work will begin in earnest on the FY12 budget. If the draconian reductions in FY11 funding for programs such as the EPA Clean and Drinking Water revolving loan program and Corps of Engineers Construction funding become institutionalized through multiple budgets, we believe that these programs will quickly cease to be relevant.

WESTCAS members can play a huge role in providing education and input to Members of Congress and key Committees that have jurisdiction over these matters. Please stay tuned for details concerning how you can make a huge difference.

Summary & Take-Away .

Perils of Pauline?

Do not expect a quick resolution to the FY11 budget agreement without some real drama.

Take-Away

WESTCAS members can play a huge role in providing education and input to Members of Congress and key Committees on the value of federal partnering, infrastructure programs such as the SRF.

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