



washington dc update

July 12, 2011

FY 12 Appropriations Bills Advance in the House

On Friday, we sent you an update on the FY12 House Interior and Environment Appropriations bill. You will recall that this is the bill that funds USEPA and a number of Department of Interior programs such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This bill was marked up in Subcommittee last Thursday and is scheduled to be marked up in full House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday.

A number of people have been quoted over the past few days saying that there is never an actual cut in Federal spending and that the entire debate really revolves around the rate that the Federal government will grow from one year to the next. And this statement would have been correct in the past.

But this is not correct for many programs in the FY12 Appropriations cycle. The USEPA Clean and Drinking Water SRF is a case in point. Compare the FY11 funding level with the levels in the House bill:

FY11 (enacted)

\$2.485 billion Clean/DW SRF
 \$1.525 billion Clean Water SRF
 \$965,000,000 Drinking Water SRF

FY12 House Provision

\$1.525 billion Clean/DW SRF
 \$689,000,000 Clean Water SRF
 \$829,000,000 Drinking Water SRF

As you can see, these are real cuts from one fiscal year to the next of nearly 40% in the combined Clean Water/Drinking Water SRF and 55% in the Clean Water Act program alone. Given how widely the SRF program has been used by water and wastewater agencies for over a generation, these cuts are going to hurt.

Who knows how the Senate or the Administration will react to reductions of this magnitude. But the next time you hear a public official saying that there are no actual cuts in the budget, please remember that while this was true in the past, it isn't today.

WESTCAS will have opportunities to weigh in on this funding issue as the FY12 Appropriations cycle advances.

Summary & Take-Away .

Real Cuts

The cuts to EPA and other agencies in the FY12 House Interior and Environment Appropriations bill includes real cuts not just "slow the growth" measures. More important to WESTCAS is the 40% cut in the combined Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF programs.

Take-Away:

WESTCAS will have opportunities to respond to the deep cuts in the SRF and other water programs. Ahead is the Senate action and, of course, the response from the Administration. Water associations, including WESTCAS, will have active listeners in both camps.

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