

Hicks-Ray Associates



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TO: WESTCAS Membership
FROM: Fred B. Hicks and Tom Ray
SUBJECT: Christmas Nostalgia

Do you remember as a child when a Christmas package was put under the tree and you had to look at it for days before you could open it on Christmas morning and see what was inside? If you are nostalgic in remembering this experience, the current situation regarding the FY12 Appropriations process is for you.

Just a few weeks ago, Congress was considering an FY12 Appropriations Omnibus bill to tie up all unresolved spending issues. But it was decided that an omnibus was way too big in these times of fiscal restraint and that a better control of the process could be afforded through the use of a “minibus” which would package just three bills at a time. After passage of a single “minibus” this process broke down.

Now the latest iteration is an FY12 “megabus” which will reportedly contain \$900 billion in spending and could be passed as early as next week. There seems to be general agreement that House and Senate Appropriators are very close to agreement on a “megabus” and that it may contain all sorts of funding provisions and also policy riders.

The one difference between water resource advocates and small children is that we’ll probably get to unwrap the “megabus” and see what’s inside as early as next week when the measure is submitted to the House Rules Committee before being taken to the House floor while kids have to wait until December 25th to open their packages. Until we do, nobody can be sure what is inside.

WESTCAS members will be especially interested in which if any of the various environmental riders that were part of the FY12 Energy and Water and also the Interior and Environment Appropriations bills. There are also hundreds of millions of dollars in differences between House and Senate levels of funding for key EPA, Corps, and Bureau of Reclamation programs.

We look forward to updating you on the “megabus” once we know more.

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