



# washington dc update

## Mr. Brown Goes to Washington, DC

January 22, 2010

### Congressional Schedule January to September, 2010

- January 27, President's State of the Union to Congress.
- First week of February, release of the President's proposed FY11 budget.
- February 15-19, President's Day Congressional Recess.
- March 29-April 12, Spring Congressional Recess.
- May 31-June 4, Memorial Day Congressional Recess.
- July 5-9, Fourth of July Congressional Recess
- August 9-September 13, Congressional Summer Recess

Massachusetts Senator-Elect Brown's reception on Capitol Hill yesterday was more akin to a rock star than a politician and reminded us of just how unpredictable events in Washington can be. Many wish they had traveled to Vegas back around Christmas and made a large bet on the success of a candidate who at that time was almost 30 points behind in the polls, was competing for a seat that had been held by Democrats for generations, and who had yet to run a single TV ad.

Because the only certainty in Federal affairs is uncertainty, this is a good moment for us to look into the crystal ball and try to figure out what may happen at least for the remainder of 2010. First and foremost, although we are writing this report in January, and we know it sounds a little strange, the fact is that there is very little time left in the second session of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Between now and the middle of September, the Congress has scheduled a total of ten weeks of "District and State work periods", otherwise known as recesses. With the Tuesday-Thursday typical work week of Congress, this means that many issues that were on the front burner last year probably won't see action this year.

A good example of this was the announcement earlier this week by Chairman Oberstar that there likely would not be time to complete work this year on the Clean Water Restoration Act. This reflects the reality that no House bill has been introduced to date and that several Senators have placed holds on the Senate version of the bill which is S. 787. The effort to re-define the "waters of the US" was perhaps the signature environmental legislation of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Inaction this year does not in any way mean that this issue goes away but it may well mean that action may be deferred into future Congresses.

So where does that leave WESTCAS and the water resources community in general? Just because major environmental initiatives may be stalled in Congress does not mean that there is not a great deal left on the table. There will likely be jobs legislation in the fairly near future that will create billions of dollars of new infrastructure funding. The Council on Environmental Quality continues its efforts to fundamentally redefine the relationship and the rules which govern how local water agencies conduct their business. And the USEPA continues its efforts at rule-making on a wide variety of issues. So, the need for WESTCAS to exert leadership and to educate in the Federal sector has never been greater. This effort must continue to address immediate issues such as funding, Executive Orders, and regulatory changes and also lay the groundwork for sound Federal policy, particularly as it relates to the arid west well beyond 2010.

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**WESTCAS**  
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