



# washington dc update

## Administration Officials Address NAS Panel on P&G Issue

April 14, 2010

Last week we joined other concerned stakeholders in a “listening session with the Chief of Staff of the Council on Environmental Quality. The topic was CEQ’s proposed update for “Principals and Guidelines” regarding how Federal agencies evaluate proposed water resources projects. Terry Breyman who is serving as the CEQ lead on P&G also attended. We provided details in our HRA report of April 8<sup>th</sup>

Another important meeting also took place last week in which a number of Administration officials including Nancy Sutley of CEQ, Jo-Ellen Darcy of the Corps of Engineers, John Tubbs of the Department of Interior, Al McGartland of EPA, and Ann Mills from the USDA met with a National Academy of Sciences Panel and commented on the current NAS review of P&G.

During the stakeholder meeting we attended last week, local groups expressed concern that the P&G as proposed by CEQ reduces the importance of economic measurements while elevating environmental protection as a factor in determining what water projects will be allowed by the Federal government. We were repeatedly assured that CEQ was intent on reaching an acceptable balance between these two considerations.

But WESTCAS members may wish to weigh two statements to the NAS panel made last week by Nancy Sutley. The first was her identification of four issues that CEQ wishes to address in P&G:

- Improvement the economic well-being of the nation present and future.
- Better protect communities from the effects of floods and storms.
- Help communities make more informed choices on where to build based on risk.
- To protect, build, and restore the environment.

Ms. Sutley continued: “I think that looking at alternatives, including nonstructural alternatives, will now be given maybe more consideration than they perhaps have been in the past, which will help our local sponsors to see that there are other alternatives than just building, particularly since such alternatives are often less expensive.” Striking a balance among these objectives will be a huge challenge.

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