

Hicks-Ray Associates



January 14, 2009

TO: WESTCAS Membership
FROM: Fred B. Hicks and Tom Ray
SUBJECT: DC Updates

With the 111th Congress hard at work and President-elect Obama set to be sworn in to office a week from today, we wanted to provide an update for our membership. WESTCAS has participated in a water summit involving major water, wastewater, water reuse, and rural water organizations. WESTCAS has also conducted a series of meetings with Hill staff as well as officials at the Bureau of Reclamation and the US Army Corps of Engineers. And you will have hopefully received the WESTCAS Stimulus letter and project list.

Our goal has been to gather as much information as possible and to position WESTCAS in a way that our membership can have a significant input into water resource related issues. This is a time filled with challenge and uncertainty. But it also offers unprecedented opportunities to secure the water future of the arid west in partnership with the Federal government and the Congress. Here goes:

STIMULUS PACKAGE

There are so many rumors and so much debate with regard to the Stimulus that what one reports in the morning may no longer be true in the afternoon. But we are confident that we'll be seeing the following:

- A huge Stimulus bill passed by around the middle of February. Speaker Pelosi has announced, "No Stimulus by February 13, no President's Day Congressional recess."
- Billions of Stimulus dollars for USEPA Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Program to be administered by State pass-through agencies.
- Billions of Stimulus dollars for the Corps of Engineers to be administered through the Corps Divisional and District offices.
- Requested up to \$500 million for Title 16 funding to be administered through the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Millions of dollars for the USDA Rural Development Program for water and wastewater grants and loans.

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The WESTCAS Stimulus letter highlights these four areas of concern and asks that they be a part of the Stimulus. As the bill progresses through both Houses of Congress and more details emerge we will be in touch with further reports.

Calendar for the House of Representatives for 2009

Please go to http://majoritywhip.house.gov/house_calendar/2009/go.pdf to access the House calendar for 2009 which gives you the schedule the House is expecting to follow during the year.

New Earmark Rules

We have attached the press release from Appropriations Chairmen Obey and Inouye laying out the three new earmark policy standards that have been adopted by the 111th Congress. Please go to <http://appropriations.house.gov/pdf/Obey-InouyeRelease01-06-pdf> to access the press release for these rules which include:

1. A requirement that each Member of Congress post their requests on the Internet for public inspection “explaining the purpose of the earmark and why it is a valuable use of taxpayer funds.”
2. Disclosure of earmarks when Appropriations Subcommittees mark up, as opposed to the full Committee.
3. Earmarks to be reduced to 50% of the 2006 level with total spending for all earmarks to be held below 1% of discretionary spending.

Please note the exact wording for this provision: “Earmarks will be further reduced to 50% of the 2006 level for non-project based accounts.” [Underlining is from us, not the Committee] This would seem to exclude Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation funding from this rule since both are project related accounts.

S-22, Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009

Senator Bingaman has introduced this legislation in his capacity as Chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. It is over 1,200 pages long and folds many of the resources and land management legislation that died in the 110th Congress last month into one huge omnibus. We will have further reports on this legislation but thought that you might wish to begin to study it yourself in the interim. You can access the bill by going to http://energy.Senate.gov/public/_files/publiclandssomnibusbill2009.pdf