

Hicks-Ray Associates



January 16, 2009

TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: Updates on Stimulus Bill and S-22

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

House Democrats yesterday introduced their version of the Stimulus bill. If you go to <http://appropriations.house.gov> you can download both the text of the bill and also the report. Page 64 addresses provisions for Corps of Engineers Construction funding. Page 68 addresses the Bureau of Reclamation provisions. And pages 123-124 addresses USEPA Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Fund provisions.

Like all massive pieces of legislation, there are pleasant surprises and also disappointments in this House Democratic version of the Stimulus. This includes:

- \$126,000,000 for Title 16 funding in the Bureau of Reclamation section of the bill with \$80,000,000 of this amount reserved for rural water systems.
- Corps of Engineers construction Stimulus funding has been reduced from the requested \$3 billion requested by advocacy groups down to \$2 billion. As currently drafted in the House Democratic version, environmental infrastructure spending would not be eligible for any of this funding.
- Advocacy groups had requested \$10 billion each for USEPA Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF funding level. This was cut to \$6 billion for Clean Water and \$2 billion for Drinking Water in the House Democratic version.
- Many of the water resources advocates we have spoken to this morning believe that water resources infrastructure funding, which totals \$8 billion out of the \$825 billion bill, or less than 1% of the total, has fared poorly.
- The “winners” in the bill are other issues such as “Clean, Efficient, American Energy;” “Transforming our Economy with Science and Technology;” “Education for the 21st Century;” “Lowering Health Care Costs;” “Helping Workers Hurt by the Economy.”

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Some in the water resources advocacy community are questioning whether these “winner” issues can do much to provide immediate stimulus for the economy, particularly when compared to the impact that “shovel ready” public works projects could have, both in creating jobs and in being able to show what public funds have bought once the projects are completed.

As WESTCAS members, we ask that you download the bills, and particularly study the provisions for the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corps of Engineers, and USEPA. Once WESTCAS has input from the membership, we can move forward with our own positions with regard to the Stimulus.

Chairman Obey of the full House Appropriations Committee announced that he will mark up the Appropriations portion of the Stimulus on February 21st, so we have an opportunity to weigh in on this issue, wearing both our WESTCAS hat and also in close partnership with other water resource advocacy groups.

S-22, The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009

S-22 passed the Senate on January 15th by a vote of 73 to 21. Much credit should go to Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico for guiding the passage of this bill in the Senate early in the first two weeks of the 111th Congress.

The final margin of victory in the Senate for S-22 should also be considered in context of a closer vote earlier this week which succeeded in bringing the bill to the floor for consideration. That vote was 68 to 24 with 10 Senators from Bureau of Reclamation States voting not to consider the bill.

With Senate passage, S-22 now goes to the House. WESTCAS needs to encourage early consideration of this legislation in the House.