



washington dc update

August 6, 2009

No Downtime in August

With the Senate getting ready to go into recess tomorrow and the House already out, Washington is getting ready to settle into its traditional August doldrums with most everybody out of town and on vacation. But WESTCAS members don't have the luxury of a month of downtime this August.

So whether you're getting your kids to go back to school, or perhaps headed to the beach of the mountains for a late summer vacation, we urge you to take along reading materials that will help to continue the learning curve we are all on with regard to proposed changes in Federal water policy. So no reason to go to Amazon.com to order the latest "summer novels" that are in vogue. The reality of drastic change in the management of water resources should be more than enough to keep us all on the edge of our seats.

Fred and Tom's suggested "must read summer reading would include:

- The excellent letter circulated yesterday from the San Juan River Commission by WESTCAS Board Members Randy Kirkpatrick and Jolene McCaleb with regard to S. 787. The letter includes useful background information on S. 787 and the historic operation of the Clean Water Act.
- The excellent draft letter circulated by WESTCAS Board member Steve Bigley which is Coachella Valley Water District's response to Senator Boxer on S. 787. The CVVD letter includes an excellent reference describing the potential impact of S. 787 on the operations of the District.
- The four page "white paper" [attached] written by Fred Caver. Mr. Caver had a 35 year career with the Army Corps of Engineers including 8 years as the Deputy Director of Civil Works which is the top civilian career position within the Corps. He writes about the potential impacts of the intent by the White House/CEQ to review Executive Order 11988 affecting flood plain management by the Federal government. This Executive Order will affect activities on everything from the 500 year floodplains on down.

When official Washington returns to work in just over 30 days, the pace will quicken both with regard to pending Congressional legislation and also the intent of the White House/CEQ with regard to issuing and revising Executive Orders. WESTCAS members are already deeply involved in these issues, as can be seen from the Coachella and the San Juan Commission letters.



But just like that famous line from “Jaws” when Robert Shaw commented, “we’re going to need a bigger boat,” WESTCAS as an organization and its individual members have to become much more involved in this historic moment. A lack of involvement now will likely mean a full generation of laws and regulations that may make it much harder for you to fulfill your mission of bring safe, affordable, and reliable water to the arid west.

As we’ve said in the past, we don’t believe that WESTCAS should simply be “against” what is happening now. Our membership has the experience and expertise to help ensure that these new water resources policies actually benefit the nation.

Earlier this week, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius wrote an op/ed for the Washington Post in which she discussed health care reform:

“President Obama and I are working closely with Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate and health care experts to make sure we get the details of health reform right. But we can’t let the details distract us from the huge benefits that reform will bring.”

It is our belief that the “details” of the massive changes in water resources management that are being proposed through Congressional legislation and White House/CEQ Executive Orders require the very closest attention of our WESTCAS member. We pledge to work with all of you during August to help get us ready for what promises to be a very momentous next few months.

Contact us:

Fred Hicks - 703.866.4290
P.O. Box 2115
Springfield, VA 22152-0115
fred@hicks-ray.com

Tom Ray - 254.855.0880
P.O. Box 955
Waco, TX 76703-0955
tom@hicks-ray.com

