



washington dc update

Oberstar Delays Introduction of Clean Water Restoration Act

December 15, 2009

Western Water Caucus

If you are not familiar with the Congressional Western Caucus, its membership, mission and current issues, you can visit its web-page at <http://robbishop.house.gov/WesternCaucus/>

Chairman Oberstar has told *Inside EPA* that he will not introduce the Clean Water Restoration Act legislation until next year. The Chairman is abandoning his own deadline, and acknowledging political issues that need to be worked out. He remarked, "**passing the bill in 2009 was our goal, but we still don't have a common agenda with the Senate, and I still have to work on House members. ... My goal is to get on it early in the next session.**"

The *Washington Times* article today reports on the Chairman's plans and the strong objections to the proposed CRWA by the Congressional Western Caucus. The Western Caucus set out its objections in a December 8th letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (a copy is attached). The letter cites "...concerns over job loss and regulatory overreach in expressing their strong objections to the Clean Water Restoration Act (CWRA) (S.787)."

According to *Inside EPA*, the 2009 deadline was originally established by Oberstar's office in November, with deadline being reiterated in early December. It is recognized by several groups that the political difficulties with the CWRA have certainly increased with the nation's economic problems and concerns with government intervention. "Critics say the bill faces massive political difficulties in the House, including enjoying less support now than in the last Congress, when 175 of Oberstar's House colleagues signed on their support."

The head of the Western Caucus and a major critic of CRWA legislation is Representative Rob Bishop of Utah. In a recent interview, he said, "Poor ideas with arbitrary deadlines have a tendency to slip past in this place, and I'm glad that's what's happening. The opposition to this bill is going to be very big, and it's going to be very real, and it's going to be very intense."

The news release by the Western Caucus, which includes a number of statements by members of Caucus expressing concerns and criticisms of the CRWA legislation, is attached for your reference. I would encourage you review the statements by individual Western Caucus members; these are an indication of the arguments and the key issues that will surround the growing political controversy.

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