

# Hicks-Ray Associates

*Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success*



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January 19, 2016

TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: DC Updates

Many of the rituals of the New Year in Washington DC are being played out during the month of January. The Congress reconvened earlier in the month. The President delivered his State of the Union speech last Tuesday. And the release of the Administration's proposed budget has been announced for February 9. What's next? Some believe that this will be a year when the Congress comes out of the starting blocks quickly and gets a lot done before mid-July, which is the point when the Congress begins a long recess for first the Republican and then the Democratic conventions. Others are not so sure.

They will be out of session all of August, then back for just a few days in September before going on another long recess that for all practical purposes will last until the week after Thanksgiving when the lame duck session of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress will begin. As Washington faces its first winter storm of the season this coming weekend, it may appear strange to be talking about a lame duck that won't begin until the holiday season of 2016.

But the fact is that the intervening 11 months will be full of political drama as our nation goes through a Presidential election plus electing 100% of the House of Representatives and 33% of the Senate. There will also be the added drama of the Obama Administration doing business more through Executive Orders than regular order through the legislative process, and the response of the Congress to this strategy. Finally, there are actually bi-partisan issues such as reauthorization of WRRDA that will likely be passed with large majorities and signed into law by the President.

The wild card in all of this is what the elections will bring. Will the House remain Republican? Will the Democrats take the majority in the Senate? Who will be our next President? We have to confess that we can only guess at this point. The one thing for certain is that after months of apparent inactivity, Federal policy will take a wild lurch forward when the lame duck session convenes the week after Thanksgiving. The only thing that an organization like WESTCAS can do is to prepare for this period of intensive activity by developing and conveying its policy positions to the Congress and the Executive Branch.

If you haven't already registered for the WESTCAS issues conference, February 18-19 in Henderson, Nevada, we hope you will do so. You can't beat the price of accommodations which is only \$52.00 a night, and this will be a great opportunity for you to join with your WESTCAS colleagues as the organization identifies Federal arena priorities for 2016 and begins its outreach to key Federal decision-makers. If you have participated in past WESTCAS Federal Issues Workshops you already know that there is a continuous interaction between those who are facilitating and attendees.

We hope you will make time on your calendar to be a part of this conversation, February 18-19, in Henderson. Please go to [www.westcas.org](http://www.westcas.org) and click on Events for a full agenda and registration information.

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