

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: DC Updates

The House and the Senate are in adjournment this week with a scheduled return on Monday for the Senate and Tuesday for the House. Actually that is not entirely correct since the Senate has been holding 30 second long “pro forma sessions” to prevent President Obama from making a “recess appointment” of his recent Supreme Court nominee. When both chambers return to regular session next week two major water related issues are on the agenda including continued consideration on a reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act [WRDA] and also continued consideration of the FY17 Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

WRDA is the authorization bill for Corps of Engineers programs. The Senate version marked up in full Senate Committee last week features new initiatives involving Clean Water and Safe Drinking water funding including EPA initiatives for water reuse and desalination. Next step for Senate WRDA will be to compete for floor time so that the bill can be debated and passed by the full Senate. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee appear to be on tract to mark up its version of WRDA the week of May 23. If all goes according to plan, the full House and the full Senate will approve their respective WRDA bills in June that will allow conferees to go to work and try to create a single bill that can be signed by the President.

The Senate will also hold a vote early next week to cut off debate on the FY17 Energy and Water Appropriations bill. At least 60 votes are required for this to happen and in two votes last week the Senate fell well short of this level. Energy and Water Appropriations fund both the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation so this legislation is important to advocates in the Arid West. As we recently reported, the House and Senate versions of this bill include substantial increases for both Corps and Bureau programs and are very worthy of strong support from WESTCAS.

This is the earliest that the Senate has considered Energy and Water Appropriations since 1974. To appreciate how much things have changed in the past 42 years consider the following:

--Federal spending: 1974/\$269.36 billion/2016/\$4 trillion

--Federal debt: 1974/\$483.9 billion/2016/\$19 trillion

--Household income: 1974/\$11,197/\$51,500

--Population: 1974/213,853,000/2016/320,000,000

Most notable political event in 1974 was the resignation of President Nixon.

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