

# Hicks-Ray Associates

*Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success*



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: DC Updates

It is just over two months until the adjournment of Congress for the Republican and Democratic conventions in July. Before that date Congress is pushing hard to make progress on key water related issues that are of interest to the Arid West. The FY17 Energy and Water Appropriations bill is on the floor of the Senate. Energy and Water funds the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the department of Energy. As we have discussed in previous updates, both the Senate and the House versions of this legislation include significant increases for Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation.

FY17 Energy and Water funding is considered the least controversial of all of the 12 Appropriations Subcommittee bills and is being used as a test case by Senate Republican Leaders. The thinking is that if Energy and Water can move forward in the legislative process, then consideration of other FY17 Appropriations bills can follow with a goal of passing each "in regular order" and not as part of a huge omnibus bill and even in time for the start of FY17 on October 1.

The last step required in the Senate for this to occur with the Energy and Water bill is a vote to end debate and move to a final passage. This requires 60 votes but so far the Republican Leadership has only managed to secure 54. Another attempt to end debate will be made this afternoon so we'll see. Much of the delay in moving the bill forward has been associated with Department of Energy concerns such as banning the purchase of "heavy water" from Iran in the future. Nothing to do with the Corps or the Bureau. However, they are bill and can't escape any delays associated with DOE funding.

On the Water Resources Development Act front, there continues to appear to be a good chance that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will mark up its version of the WRDA bill the week of May 23. If that occurs, then WRDA would get in the queue for House floor time for debate with the 1,271 page National Defense Authorization Act [NDAA] and the issue of Puerto Rican bankruptcy just ahead in line. Currently nearly 600 amendments have been submitted for NDAA so floor debate in the House may take a while.

The Senate version of WRDA which was passed by a vote of 19 to 1 out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in late April breaks new ground on a number of fronts including new EPA programs for Clean Water, Safe Drinking Water, water reuse, and water desalination. Once we have this information we can launch a careful review of the details of the House WRDA bill and use this as a guide to what WESTCAS should advocate for in the House/Senate conference on the bill.

The WESTCAS summer conference, June 22-24 in Santa Fe should provide a timely venue to discuss prospects of what we hope will become WRDA-16 and how we can all make a difference in the process. See you there!

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