

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



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TO: WESTCAS
FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates
SUBJECT: DC Updates

WRDA Progresses in the Senate

Congress is a contentious place this time of year including disagreements ranging from funding to addressing the Zika virus to the length of the Continuing Resolution that must be passed by October 1. But yesterday the Senate once again demonstrated overwhelming support for water infrastructure authorized funding. This was seen in the 90-1 vote to move WRDA to full Senate debate. Only Senator Mike Lee of Utah voted against the bill.

What happens next is that the Senate will debate the Inhofe Amendment #4980 to the Manager's Amendment #4979 to the Senate WRDA bill which is S. 2448. Each step will require Senate floor debate. An easier way to look at the issue is that almost any time a bill advances to this stage of consideration in the Senate and the motion to proceed to debate prevails by a vote of 90 to 1, the result is passage of the legislation. That is what we can confidently expect, hopefully by the end of this week.

Hicks-Ray made extensive visits to the Hill this past Friday and met with a number of offices, including Leadership offices in the House of Representatives. We repeatedly asked about the prospects for floor consideration of the House version of WRDA [H.R. 5303]. As of this morning all that we know is that Chairman Shuster of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is pushing very hard for floor time before the House recesses later this month.

With passage of the Senate WRDA bill imminent, the House has the option of either passing its bill and entering into a traditional House/Senate WRDA conference or agreeing to a conference based just on the Senate bill with House conferees pushing for inclusion of portions of their WRDA bill. We'll know more soon.

What Should WESTCAS be doing at this stage?

Since we will know much more about the path to a WRDA in the next couple of weeks, we suggest that WESTCAS closely monitor the daily flow of discussion and debate on the Hill and be prepared to weigh in once the House/Senate conference begins. The moment-to-moment debate on WRDA can be confusing. Not so when we know the basis for how the bill may be conferenced. That will be the moment for a comprehensive WESTCAS letter to make a difference.

As is frequently the case, the fall conference in Phoenix is perfectly timed to allow the Board and the membership to draft and edit such a letter.

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