

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: Congress Begins Its Pre-Election Recess

Both the House and the Senate have now adjourned until November 14. Pending something unforeseen this means that Members will be able to devote full-time to campaigning for the November 8 election without having to be in Washington DC. This is the first of a series of updates for the WESTCAS membership that will become increasingly detailed as we focus on major issues that were addressed this week. But here is a brief summary of what occurred Monday-Wednesday on the Hill:

Passage of Continuing Resolution Avoids Government Shut-down at Midnight Friday

The Senate voted 72 to 26 and the House 342 to 85 to adopt an FY17 Continuing Resolution [CR] that will run through December 9th. The Congress will come back into session on November 14 with most of its year-end work focused on a lame duck omnibus bill that should pass in mid-December. The target adjournment date of the 114th Congress is Friday, December 16. Also notable in the CR is the inclusion of funding of \$500 million to aid victims of flooding that struck earlier this summer. It is entirely possible that additional relief dollars may be found for both of these issues during the lame duck.

House Passage of Water Resources Development Act Reauthorization

The House of Representatives also began debating its version of the WRDA bill on Tuesday and completed action yesterday by passing their version of the bill by a vote of 399 to 25. This follows action in the Senate on WRDA which was adopted by a vote of 94 to 3. The Senate version of WRDA already includes funding to assist Flint, Michigan as it struggles with its drinking water infrastructure. An amendment was offered on the House floor yesterday providing \$170 million for Flint which was approved by a vote of 284-170. The expectation is that since relief for Flint is now a part of both the House and Senate WRDA bills that funding will find its way into a final version that will be negotiated in the coming weeks. The huge majorities in favor of WRDA in both Houses of Congress should create momentum to pass the bill in December.

Much hard work lies ahead since the Senate version of WRDA, at 562 pages, is much longer than the 100+ pages of the House version. House and Senate negotiators will have to figure out just how expansive they want WRDA-16 to be. Perhaps most exciting of all are the repeated pledges to return WRDA to a two-year cycle which was the norm for many years.

Please stay tuned for additional updates which we will provide right up to the WESTCAS Fall conference beginning in Phoenix on October 26th. The only guarantee is that the Arid West won't lack for issues on the Federal plate.

Fred Hicks - 703.866.4290
P.O. Box 2115
Springfield, VA 22152-0115
fred@hicks-ray.com

Tom Ray - 254.855.0880
P.O. Box 955
Waco, TX 76703-0955
tom@hicks-ray.com