



May 15, 2017

TO: WESTCAS Membership
FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates
SUBJECT: House Committee Hearing on Infrastructure

On Thursday, May 18, the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will hold a hearing titled, "Building A 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Improving Water Quality Through Integrated Planning." Testimony will be taken from witnesses appearing on behalf of the US Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the American Public Works Association, and the NRDC. This is the House Subcommittee of jurisdiction that will be responsible for the reauthorization of the Water Infrastructure Innovations for the Nation [WIIN] bill that is anticipated next year. Hearings like the one on Thursday provide an important clue for the kind of issues that might be included in the next WIIN cycle and should be candidates for issues that WESTCAS could support as an Association.

Here is an excerpt from the "Summary of Subject Matter" prepared by the T&I Committee staff.

"Given municipalities dwindling revenues due to competing municipal demands for resources, municipalities have argued EPA officials to provide the communities with increased flexibility and provide prioritization of the various regulatory requirements of the CWA, called integrated planning. Municipalities argue that through integrated compliance with stormwater and wastewater requirements, they would be able to identify the most cost effective and protective approaches to meet the requirements and prioritize their investments in addressing such requirements.

Under such an approach, EPA would evaluate a municipality's financial capabilities to address pending requirements, and in light of these capabilities, allow a municipality to identify how it would prioritize investments in wastewater and stormwater management based on the greatest public and environmental health benefit and in recognition of the municipality's ability to pay. This approach would give municipalities the flexibility to establish CSO, SSO and other pollution control strategies that best reflect local circumstances and that enable them to implement innovative or sustainable technologies, approaches, and practices to comply with such requirements, including using green infrastructure measures.

"... Municipalities are encouraging EPA to prioritize and support these activities that provide the highest environmental return per dollar spent. Municipalities are seeking a more collaborative approach where EPA and state water regulations work with communities to yield better solutions that achieve the goal of eliminating sewer overflows and addressing other waster quality issues."