

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: DC Updates

Despite confusion and dysfunction, the Federal political year is advancing with the State of the Union Speech this past Tuesday and two key dates over the next week. This includes the expiration of the current Continuing Resolution [CR] at midnight on Thursday, February 8 and the release of the President's FY19 budget on February 12. Will the government shutdown again? Will there be another short-term CR? Will there be a grand compromise involving spending, immigration, and other contentious issues? Most are betting on another short-term CR but with more than 72 hours to go before the CR expires there are no guarantees this will actually occur.

The House of Representatives is planning to vote on the CR issue on Wednesday morning, February 7 and then adjourn by noon so that Democrats can depart the Capitol for Cambridge Maryland and their annual policy retreat. Republicans held their own retreat this past week at the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia. With Democrats 100 miles away on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and most House Republicans leaving town with the House adjournment it will be up to the Senate to close the loop on another CR and to get a bill to the President before midnight on February 8.

The President made reference to his \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan during his State of the Union speech. Details for how this program and the Federal-funding component are anticipated with the release of the President's budget on February 12. We will review these proposed funding figures especially with regard to proposed funding for the Army Corps of Engineers, USEPA, and the Bureau of Reclamation and report them to the WESTCAS membership.

Progress on President Trump's environmental nominations continues with the Senate voting to confirm R.D. James as the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. The vote was 89 to 1 with only Senator Bernie Sanders voting against the nomination. The White House has withdrawn the nomination of Kathleen Hartnett White to head the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Ms. White had been approved on a party line vote of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in late November, but Senate Democrats prevented the nomination from moving to the floor. Because of this her nomination would have had to start from the beginning with the Committee review process. President Trump chose instead to withdraw the nomination.

The State of the Union Speech, details of the next CR, and a review of the President's FY19 budget proposals to the Congress will all be addressed at the WESTCAS Federal issues workshop, February 22, in Phoenix. There are still a few available places so if you have not yet registered be sure and get signed up without delay. We look forward to seeing you in Phoenix.

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