



washington dc update

May 20, 2013

What's Wrong with This Picture?

Are you a fan of the “what’s wrong with this picture” cartoon drawings where you try to identify all of the things that are wrong with the scene that is portrayed? If you are, then you won’t have any trouble figuring what is wrong with the authorization and appropriations picture that we are about to present in this update.

Last week the Senate passed a 410 page **Water Resources Development Act** reauthorization bill whose length will certainly increase once all of the amendments passed on the floor are included. WRDA addresses the breadth of our national water resources needs and calls for billions in new water related spending.

In contrast, this week House Appropriators will begin preparing their **FY14 appropriation bills**. As we reported previously, the House will at least initially hold to a \$967 billion budget cap which assumes that the sequester will stay in place for the upcoming fiscal year. The Senate is taking an opposite track which assumes that there will be a broad budget agreement between the two Houses of Congress and the White House. As a result, they will mark up their bills based on a \$1.058 trillion budget cap which is \$91 billion more than the House version.

The impact of the **House budget cap** is much worse than is apparent. \$625 billion out of the \$967 billion budget cap is allocated to just three Appropriations bills including Defense, Military Constructions/Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security. That leaves \$325 billion for the rest of government. And that means for everything including water resources. Although individual funding line items will differ, this reflects an overall **17% cut** for just about everything that is not defense, veterans, or homeland security related.

As a WESTCAS member, you can appreciate the impact that a 17% reduction would have on your own local budgets. House Appropriators admit that there is no way that the \$967 billion figure they are using will result in completed bills since Members will not accept these kinds of draconian cuts. There is even talk that House Appropriators may mark up a second set of bills which provide higher funding levels. Hicks-Ray conducted **meetings last week with House Appropriations staff** and were told that at present and without a “grand budget agreement” there seems to be no way out of the current mess.

How would a reduction of 17% in Federal funding impact local projects that you are involved in as a WESTCAS member? We would like to ask you to think about that question and to be prepared to share your perspective with others when this issue is discussed during the Legislative session at the annual conference in San Diego.

Highlight of June Conference...

Western Water position on FY14 Funding

House FY14 Appropriation Cycle

Some hard choices and hard knocks

Our meetings last week with House Appropriations Committee staff revealed the extent of the dilemma between the House budget cap of \$967 billion and the Senate, non-sequestered cap of \$1.058 trillion.

At the San Diego conference, HRA will discuss the details, but consider the major points:

1. A 17% cut across the board except for defense, veterans, and homeland security;
2. A “grand budget agreement”—is it possible in DC these days?; and
3. How will Western water be impacted and how should WESTCAS respond?

It should be an exciting session in San Diego!

Join us in San Diego!

