



washington dc update

June 13, 2011

Summary & Take-Away .

New Developments Concerning USEPA's Clean Water Guidance

The EPA Clean Water Act Guidance, which is in a period of public comment ending on July 1st, is the subject of dramatic new developments. WESTCAS members are actively working on a response that addresses the impact of this Guidance on the arid west. This document should be finalized during the annual conference next week in San Diego.

The Clean Water Guidance has long been considered a somewhat arcane topic best suited for policy wonks. But there is a rapidly growing awareness that the "Big Three" issues which include the Clean Water Act Guidance, P&G, and the severe cuts in Federal water infrastructure funding now under consideration, present a severe threat to local governments throughout the country.

Two examples of this growing awareness include a letter signed and sent last week from the National League of Cities, the National Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Counties, and the National Association of State Legislatures. [see attached]. The letter notes that because of the huge changes mandated by the Guidance that the comment period should be extended another 60 days until September 1.

The other is the introduction of HR 2018, the "Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act of 2011." The chief sponsor of this legislation is House Transportation and Infrastructure Chair John Mica of Florida who is joined by 26 co-sponsors. We have attached HR 2018 for your review. The first sentence of the legislation provides a good idea of what follows: "To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to preserve the authority of each State to make the determinations relating to the State's water quality standards, and for other purposes."

With ongoing FY12 Appropriations markups, the Clean Water Guidance in public comment period, and P&G to be issued within a few days, all of these issues have reached a critical stage. This is not only an opportunity, but indeed a historic moment for WESTCAS, and its membership, to step forward and educate the Federal sector and the water resources community as a whole, with regard to how these issues will impact the arid west. Hope to see everybody next week in San Diego.

WESTCAS Takes a Lead Role in CWA Guidance Comments

WESTCAS members are actively responding to and preparing comments on EPA's CWA Guidance. Growing awareness and concerns are evident as the July 1st comment deadline approaches: the National League of Cities and its sister-organizations are concerned with the mandates and are requesting extension of the comment period; and, importantly, the House T&I Committee chair with 26 co-sponsors introduced HR 2018 to preserve State authority in water quality standards.

Take-Away

Due to the severe impacts on water management in the arid west, WESTCAS role is critical. The CWA Guidance will be one of critical, "big three" issues taken up at a Legislative Workshop during the June conference.



See you in San Diego!



WESTCAS
Western Coalition of Arid States