

Over the weekend, the Senate passed the latest short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) which extends current FY'16 funding through April 28, 2017 for all federal agencies. The Senate wanted the extra month (beyond the originally proposed date of March 31) to give them sufficient time to complete the Trump cabinet confirmations before taking up funding and budget bills. The CR includes \$170M for the Flint water crisis. It does not include the higher FY'17 funding levels authorized for highway and transit programs in last year's FAST Act. However, the CR does include \$20M to fund the first loans under EPA's WIFIA innovative financing loan program for water projects. WIFIA was created in the 2014 WRDA bill, but had never been funded.

The Senate also passed the Corps of Engineers' Water Resources bill – now referred to as WIIN. The legislation includes the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which authorizes port, waterway, and flood protection improvements for the country as well as the Water and Waste Act of 2016 to help communities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act and authorize state regulation of coal ash. Here is a link to the final text of the bill - [Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act](#) – (ignore the bill heading). See Section 1401 (beginning on page 212) for the list of 30+ new Corps of Engineers projects authorized in the bill, totaling \$11.68B, and Section 1201 (page 139) for a list of authorized studies. Here is a [link](#) to a summary of the bill prepared by the House T&I Committee.

The House had previously passed both the CR and the WIIN water bill earlier in the week. President Obama signed the CR over the weekend and is expected to sign the WIIN bill shortly.

The 114th Congress is now over and Congress has adjourned until next year. Any bills which were not passed and signed into law are now dead and will have to be re-introduced next year.

The new 115th Congress will be sworn-in on January 4. Donald Trump will be inaugurated on January 20.

Other items:

- One major bill which did not pass before Congress adjourned was the comprehensive energy reform bill. The bi-partisan bill was in conference and came very close to passing, however, House Republicans grew increasingly reluctant to complete the measure before President-elect Donald Trump takes office in January. During the campaign, Trump expressed support for fossil fuels that the Obama administration and Democrats sought to limit in the bill. Senate advocates, however, cautioned that the energy bill may not face such smooth sailing in a new Congress with a smaller Republican majority in the Senate and an early legislative calendar that will be busy confirming Trump administration appointments.
- Congress was also not able to complete action on a tax extenders bill to extend a wide variety of expiring tax provisions.
- The Senate is expected to begin to hold confirmation hearings on some of the less controversial cabinet nominees in early January before President-elect Trump is even sworn-in. US DOT nominee Elaine Chao is expected to be part of that expedited group.
- The final Senate run-off election was held in Louisiana on Saturday. John Kennedy, the current State Treasurer, won Senator Vitter's (R-LA) open seat, keeping the seat in Republican hands. That brings the final make-up of the new Senate to 52 Republicans and 48 Democrats

(including two Independents who caucus with the Democrats). The net result is a two-seat pick-up for the Democrats, but not enough to take control.