



December 2, 2020

ELECTION RESULTS SET STAGE FOR LAME DUCK / '21 ADVOCACY

Attached you will see a full run-down of national elections and strategic observations from Sante Esposito - Key Advocates. We find ourselves again with a split Congress, though the margins in the House have tightened, which defied the common thinking of pollsters / pundits. How the key cabinet and undersecretary key nominations play out at relevant agencies and The White House will say a lot about how the President-elect plans to govern.

As previously reported, a Continuing Resolution (CR) is keeping the federal government running through Dec. 11. Congress is now back in session with the focus on FY21 appropriations bills and possible COVID relief stimulus legislation.

Regarding FY21 appropriations, on Nov. 24 the House and Senate appropriators clinched a deal on a bipartisan overall spending total - \$1.4 trillion – to fund all 12 appropriation bills in one massive omnibus bill. Now with agreement on the overall number, over the next two weeks the appropriators will decide how to divide it up by program with the goal of reaching a bipartisan, bicameral final bill on or before Dec. 11, thereby avoiding another continuing resolution.

Regarding COVID relief, House Democrats appear to be willing to get past their push for a mega omnibus bill and concede to the Republicans, who want a smaller targeted approach. Without stimulus enacted by Dec. 31, a number of programs will expire, including expanded unemployment benefits, student loan payment pause, eviction protection, paid family leave, and relief funds for states. The trickle-down impact on state budgets and infrastructure capital plans is already impacting the project pipeline throughout the nation.

The case for upgrading the U.S. infrastructure system was made clear four years ago and as we know, no major “mega infrastructure package” has been agreed to. With COVID-19 economic lockdowns bringing part of the country to Depression-level unemployment, the timing for funding more public-works projects is critical. This should be an opportunity for whatever political party resides in the White House and/or controls Congress. The CWCC remains hopeful that the new leadership group will get past “infrastructure” being a political buzzword and takes advantage of the opportunity to strengthen the economy and enhance our infrastructure systems.

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Robert Briant, Jr. – Chairman

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* Steering Committee Member



UPDATE ON WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

The attached report from Key Advocates includes a full run down of the various vehicles for funding increases to support water infrastructure investment; some measures that may be considered during the lame duck session.

Since Congress agreed to a short-term extension of the FAST Act, the need for a longer-term funding discussion is eminent. As previously reported, the House passed its mega infrastructure bill by a mostly partisan vote of 233-188 which puts markers down for programs and funding levels. The cornerstone of the bill was the reauthorization of the FAST Act – the highway/transit program, which still needs a long-term solution. See the following links:

- Text of the Moving Forward Act is: <https://transportation.house.gov/download/bill-text-moving-forward-act>
- A Section by Section is: <https://transportation.house.gov/download/sec-by-sec-moving-forward-act>

“Water items of interest” included:

- Alternative Water Source Program - \$600M - see p. 49 of the Section-by-Section and pp.1122-1124 of the Bill Text;
- Clean Water SRF -\$40B (\$8B annually for 5 years) - see p.50 of the Section-by-Section and pp.1132-1133 of the Bill Text;
- Safe Drinking Water SRF - \$4.140B for FY22; \$4.8B for FY23; and \$5.5B for FY 24 and 25 - see p.61 of the Section-by-Section and p.1463 of the Bill Text; and,
- Title 16 WIIN Grants - \$500M - sec p.78 of the Section-by-Section and pp.1781-1783 of the Bill Text; and,
- Rewrite of the Huffman omnibus bill including a process to de-authorize inactive USBR water projects

The three bills of greatest importance are the WRDA reauthorization bills, "America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020" (AWIA) and the "Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020"). These include funding levels that are supported by the CWCC.

Highlights of these bills and others are included in the full report from Key Advocates.

KEY ADVOCATES REPORT

Included with this notice is Key Advocates recent report which is current to the end of November.

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