



**March 1, 2024**

### **Appropriations Deadlines Extended**

As we have previously reported, the inability of Congress to reach a budget accord has resulted in continuing resolutions that imposed deadlines of March 1 and March 8 to pass appropriations bills or risk a government shutdown.

An agreement was recently reached to extend funding until March 8 for a number of departments, including Transportation and Interior, which funds the State Revolving Funds (SRFs), and Energy and Water which funds Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation (WIIN) grants.

Under the agreement, additional agencies would be funded until March 22. It is unclear how the Appropriations bills will be considered but action on these bills is expected next week.

### **SRF Funding and WIIN Grants**

The House version of the Interior Appropriations bill differs from the Senate bill which provides baseline funding and earmarks totaling \$1.63 billion for the Clean Water SRFs. The House-passed bill provides a total of \$1 billion for Clean Water SRFs which includes reduced baseline funding and higher earmarks. The Coalition supports the higher baseline funding levels for Clean Water SRFs that are included in the Senate-reported bill.

For the Safe Drinking Water SRFs, the House Interior Appropriations bill provides \$870 million while its Senate counterpart provides \$1.12 billion. Similarly, CWCC supports the Senate version which provides higher baseline funding and opposes the House version which cuts baseline funding.

Both the House and Senate Energy and Water Appropriations bills provide \$20 million for WIIN grants.

### **Earmarks**

The Coalition supports the earmark funding levels in the Senate bill and opposes the higher earmark levels in the House-passed bill. The Coalition also opposes the use of earmarks to reduce baseline funding.

The House Interior appropriations bill provides \$470 million for earmarks for the Clean Water SRFs while the Senate bill provides \$345 million for earmarks.

For the Safe Drinking Water SRFs, the House Interior Appropriations bill provides \$410 million for earmarks while \$243 million is allotted for earmarks in the Senate bill.

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Robert Briant, Jr. – Chairman

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\* Steering Committee Member



The Coalition continues to pursue discussions with policy makers to discontinue the practice of using earmarks as takedowns from SRF funding. The Coalition's position is that this practice is contrary to the goals of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which aimed to increase SRF spending.

### **Parameters of the General Budget Agreement**

Under the January deal on the overall FY24 budget, appropriators will direct funding for individual programs but have to stay within the agreed-to totals. Non-Defense budgets would remain flat while Defense programs would see a three percent increase and various other expenditures would be rescinded. Spending cuts would be imposed if Congress fails to adhere to these limits.

### **FY24 House Congressional Budget/President's Budget**

It is likely there will be no FY24 congressional budget resolution as the House Republican Resolution which contains substantial spending cuts has not been considered in either House. Despite the failure to enact a FY24 budget, President Biden is expected to release his budget on March 11.

### **STREAM Act**

Congressional staff has been taking action that could result in movement on the STREAM Act which would provide \$300 million for water recycling, \$750 million for surface and groundwater storage and conveyance projects, \$150 million for desalination projects, \$100 million for drinking water projects for disadvantaged communities, and \$250 million for environmental restoration.

### **Garamendi Permitting Amendment**

The Coalition was included on a list of supporters of an amendment that would allow the U.S. EPA to issue National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permits (NPDES) for public works projects, which would include municipally owned wastewater treatment or water recycling plants, for up to 10 years instead of the current maximum of five years.

### **Other Issues**

The CWCC continues to pursue additional actions to secure critical funding for water projects, including Alternative Water Source Program projects and mega recycled water projects.

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## Water Week Fly-In

The CWCC will be participating in Water Week and the National Water Policy Fly-In which will take place from April 9-10. The CWCC will be hosting a virtual meeting on April 10. Details will be provided shortly.

## Key Advocates Report

Included with this notice is Key Advocates' report from February 29, 2024 which provides more detail on these and other issues.

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