

**TO: Public Affairs & Legislation Committee  
(Directors Hinman, Clark and Dick)**

**FROM: Karl Seckel/Brett Barbre**

**DATE: February 14, 2011**

**SUBJECT: Recent Travel to Washington DC – February 2011**

The purposes of the meetings in Washington DC was to scope out the sense of direction of Congress with respect to funding for this year and next, update our Representatives and Senators on how the ocean desalination project is proceeding, plant ideas for funding in future years, and to stay in touch. We had meetings with the following individuals:

- Congressman Gary Miller and Sandra Bitter, Water Legislative Assistant
- Ryan Hunt, Chief Appropriations Coordinator for Senator Feinstein
- Lynn Abramson, Water Legislative Assistant to Senator Boxer
- Josh Johnson, Republican staff member for the Senate Energy & Water Committee
- Roger Cockrell, staff member on the US Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Committee on Appropriations
- Brad Hiltcher from MET
- Jim Barker, James C. Barker, PC, and Catherine Townsend and Dana DeBeaumont, Townsend Public Affairs DC office.

What we heard (from various sources):

- No progress is anticipated this year on the Clean Water Act.
- The prognosis for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) moving forward this year is unknown. Since it is made up of so many earmarks, the legislation moving forward is problematic. Someone mentioned the desire to move WRDA this year and to possibly use an appropriation vehicle that does not name specific projects. It is not clear how this would work or if it would be successful.
- At meetings with OC House members, Director Barbre requested that they sign on as co-sponsors of the Hoover Power Bill to support MET. Most House members had signed on last year and agreed to do so again this year.
- Most folks believe that FY 10-11 will be funded via a Continuing Resolution adopted in March with roll backs to 2008 and pre-stimulus levels. The House will likely want additional cuts.

- The definition of earmarks and how they will be dealt with needs to be developed. Typically, earmarks are used by Congress to increase the spending by the Administration Budget. Some were questioning with the level of cuts being sought, whether the level of the Administration budget would even succeed. It is also likely that the House and the Senate will not be able to come together on their proposals and how they do business this year (and possibly next) and so great uncertainty also exists for FY 11-12. Would next year be covered by another Continuing Resolution – it is a possibility. In addition, we will have to wait for the fall-out from the 2012 election to see what moves forward.
- We asked several folks about the Title XVI spending and whether or not it would be increased. There were not any optimistic opinions on this account. Based on input we received, we believe we are still better off seeking Corps of Engineering funding.
- The Energy and Water linkage is still strong and may open up some possibilities. One suggestion was that we look for funding from the energy side of things, possibly through the Department of Energy (DOE) or actually even the Department of Defense (DOD) because of the water requirements that occur for base housing.
- There seems to be quite a bit of craziness over just cutting anything that can be cut, irrespective of the consequences. It will take time for this to settle out.
- We discussed the concept of whether or not the Corps of Engineers could open up a competitive grant process where the Corps is given a block of funding and they get to decide where the money goes, or possibly via some criteria for a competitive grant process. They have not done this before, however, the Stimulus funding directed to the Corps did have requirements for certain levels of environmental infrastructure funding that needed to be met. This was planted as a “seed” on how to convert earmarks into a grant funding program.
- It has gotten to the point that even the Bay-Delta funding has been questioned as being an “earmark” and questioned whether it should be funded.
- The question was raised in several meetings about the Corp of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and STAG grant spending accounts which have many, many earmarks and whether these would all be targeted and gutted, or converted into some other form of programs.
- Everybody talked about cuts – but nobody knows the extent of the cuts or how they will be implemented. There is a wide difference in the position of the two parties.
- Staff from Senator Feinstein’s office asked if we had any input where cuts should be made (they are looking for all the help they can get).
- Among our consultant group, we discussed the question regarding what MWDOC’s role should be in this period of transition or if we should take a year or two off from seeking Federal funds. Following were the range of comments:

- The almost certainty of a Continuing Resolution for this year and possibly next leaves funding for local projects unlikely in the near future.
- MWDOC has spent a lot of time and effort making in-roads on the Federal side and if we pull back at this time, we lose a large portion of the investment we have made, we lose our spot in line, and it may cost us over the long run.
- Looking for Federal Funding is a marathon and is built on developing and maintaining relationships. We should not get out at this time.
- We need to continue to develop the relationships we have and build for what might happen one, two or three years down the road.