



Nor'wester Newsletter

Issue # 591 | September 29, 2016

[PNWA Website](#)

[About PNWA](#)

[Action Agenda](#)

[PNWA Events](#)

[Contact Us](#)

House WRDA Passes

The House passed their version of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016 yesterday by a vote of 399 to 25. After heated negotiations over several days, inclusion of language authorizing \$170 million to address the Flint water crisis helped get the support needed for passage. PNWA is very pleased that several provisions benefitting the Northwest were included, and that WRDA continues to move forward. We will be urging support of a final, conferenced bill in both chambers when Congress returns from recess following the November elections.

Members of the Northwest House delegation have been working hard to support regional priorities throughout the WRDA process. In particular, we would like to recognize Rep. Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, who helped draft the legislation and championed a provision in the original House bill to take the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) off budget in FY2027 and provide the revenues directly to the Corps of Engineers. While this amendment was ultimately removed from the final version, we appreciate the Congressman's outstanding leadership and commitment to ensuring that the full trust fund revenues are used for our nation's ports. We look forward to partnering with the Congressman and his staff to continue this fight in future.

In This Issue

[House WRDA Passes](#)

[Congress passes
continuing resolution to
fund government through
December 9th](#)

PNWA
Fact Sheets



Upcoming
Events

We would also like to highlight that an amendment sponsored by Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R, WA-3) to help combat invasive species in the Columbia River Basin was passed late Tuesday night and is included in the final bill. This will expand the availability of funds for watercraft inspection stations in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. Additional amendments were proposed that PNWA was very supportive of, but were not included in the final bill. In particular, we would like to highlight the following:

- Columbia River Mile 77 Turning Basin. Rep. Herrera Beutler submitted an amendment to incorporate a turning basin at Columbia River Mile 77. A turning basin in this location will enhance efficient and safe transportation for the Lower Columbia River, benefitting growers and shippers in the Northwest and Midwest. PNWA has been leading the effort to establish a federal turning basin in this location, and we will continue to advocate for designation of this feature in a future bill.
- Columbia River Basin Restoration Act (CRBRA). Rep. Blumenauer sponsored an amendment to authorize the CRBRA, which would establish a voluntary grant program to clean up toxins in the Columbia River Basin. The CRBRA was included in the Senate WRDA, and PNWA will be working to ensure it is included in a final bill.

Now that the bill has passed both chambers, the process of reconciling the differences between them officially begins. While Congress seems motivated to pass a WRDA in the waning days of this legislative session, there are significant differences between the House and Senate bills that will need to be worked out in the lame duck session. Throughout the process, PNWA will continue to strongly advocate for our Northwest priorities as the bills are conferenced. Please contact [Heather Stebbings](#) with questions.

Congress passes continuing resolution to fund government through December 9th

A temporary continuing resolution (CR) was passed by Congress late yesterday that will fund the federal government through December 9th. The bill passed the Senate 72-16 and was passed by the House a few hours later by a margin of 342-85. It was one of the final bills passed by Congress before members adjourned for recess. Congress is scheduled to return after the elections, the week of November 14th.

The CR funds the government at FY2016 levels and provides \$1.1 billion for aid to fight the Zika virus and \$500 million for states which have suffered recent major flooding. A decision by House leadership to include \$170 million in funding for the Flint water crisis in the recently passed House WRDA helped to remove a major impasse for the CR. The outcome of the election will very likely impact how appropriations are handled for the remainder of FY2017, the fiscal year that runs from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017. PNWA is encouraging support for an omnibus in the lame duck session, to ensure Northwest projects are not put on hold due to uncertain federal funding.

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