



NOR'WESTER



Issue 281

July 26, 2007

In this issue:

WRDA bill moves a step closer to completion

WRDA bill moves a step closer to completion

Yesterday, the House named their conferees for the 2007 Water Resources Development Act conference that will resolve differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. Many WRDA-watchers view this as a signal that staff-level negotiations may be successfully drawing to a close, and anticipate the possibility of House and Senate floor votes of a conferenced WRDA bill either just prior to Congress' annual August recess, or, more likely, when legislators return in early September.

In April, the House passed their version of the bill by a margin of 394-25, and the Senate passed their bill in May by 91-4. The Senate immediately named their conferees, which includes Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), who is the chairwoman of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee. The House has waited to appoint their conferees, but today we are pleased to note that Rep. Brian Baird (D, WA-3) is among those who have been selected.

PNWA has lobbied for Northwest priorities in this bill for several years, and we eagerly anticipate the final passage of this long overdue legislation. We are especially grateful to our Northwest Congressional delegation, who have been great champions of the WRDA provisions that will impact our region's trade and the environment. Specifically, PNWA has worked with our Northwest delegation on four letters of support that have been sent to the committees in the past few months, as staff-level conference activity has transpired. Following are brief descriptions of the issues that have garnered high levels of Northwest Congressional support:

West coast hopper dredges

Both the House and Senate versions of WRDA contain PNWA's supported language that would remove operating restrictions from the *Essayons* and *Yaquina*. We are pleased that both chambers are in agreement on the *Essayons* and *Yaquina*, with matching language to lift arbitrary restrictions on the number of days these federal hopper dredges may perform work. Twelve Northwest House members and five Senators recently sent letters to the House and Senate committees in support of this WRDA language. These letters can be viewed at www.pnwa.net under "Water Resources Development Act".

Section 214

"Section 214" was first authorized in WRDA 2000, and has been the subject of a great deal of PNWA and stakeholder efforts to avert sunset over the last few years. This authority allows non-federal government entities to provide additional funding for Corps regulatory activities, and is currently authorized through December 31, 2008. PNWA strongly supports the Senate WRDA bill language that would make this authority permanent. The House version of WRDA included an extension of the authority through 2010. PNWA worked with our Northwest delegation to spearhead letters in support of Section 214 permanence, which garnered the signatures of sixteen Congressmen from Oregon, Washington, Idaho and California, and every Senator from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Sen. Feinstein of California. To view these support letters, visit www.pnwa.net and click on "Water Resources Development Act".

A full listing of all PNWA-supported provisions contained in the House and Senate WRDA bills can be found at www.pnwa.net. Once the WRDA conference is complete, and a compromise bill is produced, it will still need to be approved again by both chambers, and only then would it head to the President's desk to be signed into law.

PNWA Staff Contact: [Kristin Meira](#)