



Continuing Resolution Keeps Federal Programs Afloat

On September 30th, President Bush signed a **continuing resolution package that funds the federal government through March 6, 2009**. The bill is part of a package that also includes three of the 12 annual appropriations measures Congress was able to complete prior to the end of the fiscal year, including Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Homeland Security Appropriations Acts for fiscal year 2009, as well as a disaster relief package. Fiscal Year 2009 begins on October 1, 2008 and the CR provides funds from October 1 through March 6, 2009. Under the terms of the CR, programs will be funded at their FY 2008 level. The Senate is expected to pass the measure by the end of the week.

Highlights affecting WRC members are detailed below.

Disaster Assistance

- Community Development Block Grants: \$6.5 billion, providing communities with flexible grants for efforts to help them recover from disasters, including providing temporary housing, repairing and replacing damaged homes and public infrastructure, and for economic development activities.
- New Orleans Levees: \$1.5 billion, to allow the greater New Orleans area to pay the local cost share of hurricane and storm damage reduction projects over a 30-year period and ensure work is done by 2011.
- Army Corps of Engineers: \$1.3 billion, to repair damage to infrastructure caused by disasters including the Midwest floods and hurricanes, protecting citizens across the country.

FY 2009 Homeland Security Appropriations

- Port Security Grants: \$400 million, rejecting the President's \$190 million cut and the same as 2008, for grants to protect critical port facilities and infrastructure, as authorized in the Safe Ports Act.
- Flood Map Modernization: \$220 million, \$70 million above the President's request, to update, review, and maintain flood maps used to determine rates for the National Flood Insurance Program.

Other Highlights

Offshore Drilling Ban: expires on September 30th; the White House rejected any language to provide for a responsible expansion of drilling in the OCS. All other laws and regulations concerning offshore leasing and development remain in place.