

**August 9, 2010**

### **Senate, MMB Head To Recess**

Members of the U.S. Senate left Washington last week to begin their August recess, but not before approving long-stalled legislation to provide states with funding to extend Medicaid and prevent teacher layoffs. The House will reconvene this week to pass the bill, but will then immediately resume its August break. Congress is expected to be out of session until the week of September 13, and *Monday Morning Briefing* will resume publication when it returns.

Despite the Senate's passage of the state aid bill last week, some other proposals saw no action. The Environment and Public Works Committee did not hold a markup of water facility security legislation, but it may be revisited when the Senate returns.

### **RTCR Informational Sessions Added**

EPA has scheduled two additional public meetings to provide information about its proposed revisions to the Total Coliform Rule. A public meeting will be held on August 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. PDT in San Francisco; and a webcast will be conducted on August 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. EDT. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/TCRmeetings>.

### **GAO Report Studies Infrastructure Bank, Possible Funding Approaches**

Stakeholder groups broadly support the creation of a national infrastructure bank but hold varying opinions on how it should be funded and whether it should focus solely on water and wastewater projects, according to a study released last week by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). The report, *Wastewater Infrastructure Financing: Stakeholder Views on a National Infrastructure Bank and Public-Private Partnerships*, considered various methods to promote increased infrastructure spending.

### **AMWA Award Nominees, Policy Recommendations Sought**

In preparation for AMWA's 2010 Annual Meeting (October 24-27), members are invited to submit nominations for the President's Award and the Donald R. Boyd Award. The President's Award is presented to individuals who have been active in the association and have made outstanding contributions to the improvement of water management. The Donald R. Boyd Award was established to acknowledge extraordinary service in the drinking water field by individuals inside and outside the association membership.

During the annual meeting, the membership also votes on changes and additions to the association's policy statements. The policy statements reflect AMWA's positions on issues relevant to the association. Members are invited to submit new policy statements and recommendations for revisions to existing statements.

A packet was sent via mail to all members last week that details the call for awards and policy statement revisions. The information is also on the AMWA website ([www.amwa.net](http://www.amwa.net)) under "What's New." Award nominations and policy statement suggestions must be submitted to the National Office by Thursday, September 9.

GAO made no recommendation on whether an infrastructure bank should be created, but instead surveyed stakeholder groups representing construction, engineering, municipal, environmental, and water and wastewater associations on the policy issues that would need to be addressed in formulating a bank. Among its findings:

- One-third of responding stakeholder groups said an infrastructure bank should only fund water and wastewater infrastructure, while two-thirds responded that it should also fund transportation and energy projects.
- There was no stakeholder consensus on whether an infrastructure bank should be administered by an existing federal agency, structured as a government corporation or structured as a government-sponsored enterprise.
- A majority of stakeholders said the federal government should provide initial capital for an infrastructure bank and that the bank should offer a variety of mechanisms for financing projects, such as providing direct loans, loan guarantees and funding for existing water infrastructure programs.
- Most stakeholders agreed that the bank should prioritize projects that address the greatest infrastructure needs and generate the greatest environmental and public health benefits, but no consensus emerged on whether projects serving the most people or generating the most jobs should receive higher priority.

A copy of the report is available at [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-728](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-728).

### **Efforts Underway For National Climate Assessment**

The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) recently updated stakeholders via e-newsletter about the latest developments of the third U.S. National Climate Assessment (NCA). The upcoming NCA will differ from previous assessments by focusing on evaluating progress in the U.S. regarding climate adaptation and mitigation and providing information to help support regional and sector-specific decisions. The NCA endeavors to establish “an ongoing, consistent and replicable approach to assessing current and projected climate impacts and climate-related risk in the context of other stressors.” Information from the NCA will be used to prioritize federal activities and support adaptation decisions within regions, states and sectors.

One of the seven key objectives of the NCA is to establish a permanent, sustainable assessment capacity within and outside of the federal government by building networks of regional and sectoral participants that can engage in the process. Another objective is to rely as much as possible on regional networks, as well as public and private partners, to ground-truth assessment elements and to evaluate adaptation options and science gaps.

AMWA plans to keep members up-to-date on opportunities for engagement in this important process. Anyone interested in receiving detailed updates from USGCRP via periodic NCA newsletters should send an email to [engagement@usgcrp.gov](mailto:engagement@usgcrp.gov).

## **Listening Sessions Set On Water Quality Standards Regulation Revisions**

EPA has scheduled two public listening sessions to describe potential changes for water quality standards regulation under the Clean Water Act. They will be held via audio teleconference on August 24 and 26, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. EDT. Registration and additional information about the potential regulatory changes are online at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/rules/wqs/listening.html](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/rules/wqs/listening.html).

At the sessions, EPA will provide a review of the current regulation and a summary of the revisions the agency is considering. EPA will also take questions and public comment from stakeholders.