

# WAP - Q1 2015 Legislative Report

## **INLAND WATERWAYS USERS BOARD REPORT EXPECTED SOON**

The last meeting of the Inland Waterways Users Board was held in Linthicum, MD on November 18, and the Board's Annual Report has been filed. It is expected to be released by the Corps soon.

## **9 CENT USER FEE INCREASE**

Tonight (12-16-14), the Senate voted 76-16 to pass H.R. 5571, tax extenders legislation that included a 9-cent increase in the inland waterways diesel user fee. The increase will be effective April 1, 2015 and funds – around \$40 million from industry levies – will be deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund for the benefit of priority navigation project construction and major rehabilitation.

On December 3, the House of Representatives passed by a vote of 404-17 the "Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE)" Act that included the 9-cent increase to the user fee.

The user fee increase is the most recent key recommendation of the Capital Development Plan (CDP) to be adopted into law, with four of the CDP's elements adopted through the passage of WRRDA.

## **The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 "CROMNIBUS"**

In mid-December, the House and Senate passed the "The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015," known as the "Cromnibus" (H.R. 83), delivering strong funding for the Corps of Engineers Civil Works' mission at \$5.454 billion, \$921.5 million above the Administration's request.

The Corps' Construction Account funding of \$1.639.5 billion was also strong, with an increase of \$514.5 million above the Administration's proposal, including \$281 million for Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) projects, to be allocated by the Secretary of the Army, a \$112 million increase above the Administration's request.

The Corps' Operations & Maintenance Account was solidly funded at \$2.908.5 billion, \$308.5 million above the Administration's request and \$47.5 million above FY14 funding levels, including at least \$42 million in additional funds for inland navigation.

The Olmsted Lock and Dam project was funded at least \$160 million under the 85%/15% cost-share change enacted in WRRDA. The Lower Mon project received at least \$9 million. It is hoped that the additional \$112 million can provide even more funding for Olmsted and other priority projects underway.

No less than \$1.1 billion is provided from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, a \$100 million increase above FY '14 and \$185 million higher than the Administration proposal.

No funding was provided for hydrologic separation measures related to the spread of Asian carp.

#### WCI WASHINGTON MEETINGS FEB 10-12

WAP will have a strong presence again at this year's WCI DC meetings with the following scheduled to attend:

Patrick Kelly – AEP River Operations  
David McQuiston – Thomson, Rhodes & Cowie/Port of Pittsburgh Commission Board  
Brian Loring – Murray American Towing  
Richard Kreider – Campbell Transportation Company  
Robert Shema – Marion Hill Associates  
Maggie Cummins – Marion Hill Associates  
Bob Harrison – Bellaire Harbor Services  
Bob Schaefer – Riverlift Industries  
Michael Somales – Murray

The two day agenda includes:

- WCI's legislative, grassroots and media plans in 2015 to sustain the remarkable gains made in 2014:
  - What is the plan?*
  - How are we going to realize our goals for a modern, reliable and efficient waterways transportation system?*
  - How is WRRDA 2014 being implemented?*
  - How and will Congress fund infrastructure investment under Republican management? Our panelists will make the projections that matter!*
- Attend WCI's Board of Directors' meeting, along with meetings of the National Waterways Foundation, WCI Conservation Committee and WCI Membership Committee
- Hear from confirmed speakers Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY), Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN), and a panel of expert Hill staffers about the outlook in the new Congress during the Waterways Seminar, among other speakers to be confirmed
- Participate in Capitol Hill visits to meet and help educate new, constituent Members of Congress about the value of the inland waterways and the need for the highest appropriations levels

- Honor Senator David Vitter (R-LA) and Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) with WCI's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Service Awards for 2015

#### **UPCOMING INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES**

- **January 20:** President's State of the Union Address
- **February 2:** Release of the President's Budget
- **February 10-12:** WCI Washington Meetings, Washington Seminar, Capitol Hill Fly-In, Leadership Service Award Presentation (St. Regis Hotel, Washington, DC)