

News!

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CONGRESS RETURNS TO SESSION

After a two week district work period, the Senate and House return to session on April 21st. The Senate will start the week with Department of Justice nominations before moving on to financial issues. The House will come back into session Tuesday for three days and will bring up a water research and development bill to capitalize on Earth Day. The House also soon hopes to consider the \$38.4 billion FY09 defense supplemental appropriations bill.

Behind the scenes, the Democratic leadership is pushing for a conference committee agreement on the FY10 budget resolution. It appears that both the House and Senate budget resolutions contain a \$3.4 billion increase over FY09 for natural resources. However, it is difficult to provide a direct comparison since the FY10 budget authority includes emergency spending and other contingencies. The FY10 natural resources budget also includes spending for EPA clean-ups and hurricane recovery so there is no guarantee that additional appropriations will go to parks, recreation and preservation programs. However, it's the appropriations and not the budget committee that decides the final program spending amounts.

There is no definitive timetable for the release of President Obama's complete FY10 budget. Until then the FY10 Presidential funding rec-

ommendations for the historic preservation programs is unknown.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION CAUCUS HOLDS HILL BRIEFING

On April 15th the House Historic Preservation Caucus, in coordination with the House High Performance Building Caucus, held a joint congressional luncheon to educate staff on the synergies between historic and high performance buildings. Speakers included Ralph DiNola from the American Institute of Architects along with Emily Wadhams and Pat Lally from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The speakers presented information on legislative initiatives that include historic buildings as part of a national sustainability agenda and several case studies from Portland, OR depicting sustainable preservation practices.



HISTORIC LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION BILL INTRODUCED

On March 27th, Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Carl Levin (D-MI) introduced S. 715, the National Lighthouse Stewardship Act. This bill

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

INTERIOR NOMINATIONS UP-	2
UPCOMING EVENTS	2

would create a three-year competitive grant program to be administered by the Department of Interior that will help preserve and rehabilitation historic lighthouses across the country.

Senator Snowe states in her press release “By helping to provide the necessary resources to ensure our lighthouses are not damaged or lost, this legislation will not only preserve a significant component of our heritage, but also go a long way in helping to boost local tourism and spur job growth in our communities.” S. 715 would authorize \$20 million for a three-year competitive grant pilot program that would provide funds to stewards of historic lighthouses to help them preserve and rehabilitate the lighthouses under their care. Eligible grant recipients include States, units of local government and non-profit historic societies.



INTERIOR NOMINATIONS UPDATE

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee affirmed Thomas Strickland as assistant secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The Environment and Public Works (EPW) committee gave their vote of approval on April 1st. EPW ranking member, James Inhofe (R-OK) has indicated that despite his objections to Strickland’s endangered species

policy; he will not put a hold on Strickland nomination.

The remainder of President Obama’s Interior nominees are not faring as well. Sen. Bob Bennett (R-UT) has placed a hold on the nomination of David Hayes as deputy secretary of Interior. Hayes was confirmed by the Senate Energy Committee mid-March but is still awaiting full Senate approval which will not come until Sen. Bennett has released his hold. Sen. Bennett placed the hold because of Sec. Salazar’s decision to prevent the issuance of 77 oil and gas leases in Utah.

On March 26th, President Obama announced his nomination for Interior Department Solicitor, Hilary Tompkins and assistant secretary of Interior for Policy, Management and Budget, Rhea S. Suh. Tompkins is a member of the Navajo Nation and worked most recently as chief counsel to New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson. Suh worked most recently for the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, managing a \$200 million program to build ecological integrity.

The Obama Administration has yet to nominate an assistant secretary of Interior for Land and Minerals Management, a Park Service director, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) director, or a Fish and Wildlife Service director.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

July 8-11, 2009 – NCSHPO Summer Board Meeting, Big Bend, Texas