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### U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Appoint WRDA Conferees and Begin Negotiations

Nov 22, 2013

In October, the U.S. House of Representatives easily passed an \$8 billion water infrastructure bill known as the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA). The bill authorizes about two dozen port, dam, flood protection and environmental projects throughout the country, including nearly \$1 billion in Florida projects. The Senate passed their version of the bill this past May, leaving a House-Senate conference of their respective bills (S.601 and H.R. 3080) as the next step in the legislative process.

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) was named the Chair of the Conference Committee. The Senate also named ranking member Sen. David Vitter (R-La.), along with Sens. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), John Barrasso (R-Wy.) and James Inhofe (R-Okla.) to the Committee.

The House of Representatives last week named the following members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as conferees: **Republicans** - Bill Shuster (PA), John J. Duncan, Jr. (TN), Frank LoBiondo (NJ), Sam Graves (MO), Shelley Moore Capito (WV), Candice Miller (MI), Duncan Hunter (CA), Larry Bucshon (IN), Bob Gibbs (OH), Richard Hanna (NY), **Daniel Webster (FL)**, Tom Rice (SC), Markwayne Mullin (OK), and Rodney Davis (IL). **Democrats** - Nick J. Rahall, II (WV), Peter DeFazio (OR), **Corrine Brown (FL)**, Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), Tim Bishop (NY), Donna Edwards (MD), John Garamendi (CA), Janice Hahn (CA), Rick Nolan (MN), **Lois Frankel (FL)**, Cheri Bustos (IL). Also appointed were three members of the House Natural Resources Committee: Doc Hastings (R-WA), Rob Bishop (R-UT), and Grace Napolitano (D-CA).

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Several issues emerged as negotiations commenced including environmental “streamlining” provisions (such as the National Environmental Policy Act review process), which differs in the respective bills approved by each chamber, and ocean policies where the Senate favors an endowment for state grants to support scientific research and restoration, and the House favors existing federal programs.

Although the Senate will soon leave for a two-week recess, negotiations will continue with many stakeholders believing that a final agreement could be reached before Congress recesses for the year. Once the conferees agree on a final product, the full House and Senate must approve the measure before it can be sent to the President for his signature.

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