

Congress Fails To Pass Water Resources Development Act

December 8, 2006

Congress failed this week to pass a bill to reauthorize the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) before the end of the lame-duck session. "As of 1:47 p.m. today, WRDA is dead," Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK), the departing chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said at a news conference on Tuesday.

The House and Senate were unable to reconcile budgetary and program differences between the two versions of H.R. 2864--the Senate version passed in July and the House bill that passed in July 2005. Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), the incoming chair of the committee, said this week that enacting WRDA will be a major priority in 2007.

WRDA has been a priority of ASCE as navigable waterways received a grade of D- as part of the Report Card for America's Infrastructure. In addition, the Senate version included language to reauthorize the National Dam Safety Program and establish a National Levee Safety Program. While the Dam Safety Act may pass on its own (see above story), the Levee Safety Bill will have to be reintroduced in the 110th Congress.

This report is written by the ASCE Government Relations Staff. If you have any questions or comments about items in this report please contact govwash@asce.org.