

House approves FY 2016 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill

May 1, 2015

On May 1, the House passed a \$34.5 billion Energy and Water spending bill by a vote of 240-177, largely along party lines. The “Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act” (H.R. 2028) includes a \$1.2 billion increase in funding for the Department of Energy (DOE), the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and other related agencies in fiscal year (FY) 2016. The funding legislation fell \$633 million short of the Obama Administration’s proposed budget.

The bill allocates \$10.3 billion for DOE’s science and energy programs, including a \$34 million increase to fund nuclear and fossil fuel research, but cuts clean energy funding by \$279 million compared to FY 2015 levels. An additional \$150 million would be appropriated to reopen the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site. The bill also contains language that bars USACE from implementing the new “Waters of the U.S.” (WOTUS) rule, regulations currently being finalized by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to increase the number of streams and wetlands listed under the Clean Water Act.

Democrats in the House largely opposed the bill, but failed to pass any amendments regarding the WOTUS rule and clean energy funding; the White House has threatened to veto the bill. Nevada Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), expressed their discontent with the “deeply flawed” Yucca Mountain project in their state. The Senate is in the process of drafting their own bill regarding energy and water spending.

Sources: Congress.gov, E&E News, EPA
