

Water Resource Issues in the 114th Congress

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http://aquadoc.typepad.com/files/crs_report_wr_issues_114congress.pdf

The 114th Congress faces many water resource development, management, and protection issues. Congressional actions shape reinvestment in aging federal infrastructure (e.g., dams, locks, and levees) and federal and nonfederal investment in new infrastructure, such as water supply augmentation, hydropower projects, navigation improvements, and efforts to restore aquatic ecosystems. These issues often arise at the regional or local levels, but often have a federal connection.

Ongoing issues include competition over water, drought and flood responses and policies, competitiveness and efficiency of U.S. harbors and waterways, and innovative and alternative financing approaches. The 114th Congress also may continue oversight of operations of federal infrastructure during drought and low-flow conditions, past large-scale flooding issues (e.g., Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Katrina, Missouri and Mississippi River floods), and balancing hydropower generation, recreational use, and protection of threatened and endangered species.

In addition to oversight, each Congress also provides appropriations for major federal water resource agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation).

Because of recent water conditions, disasters, or legal or agency developments, certain river basin issues are particularly likely to receive congressional attention during the 114th Congress. The Columbia River, Missouri River, and Sacramento and San Joaquin River (Central Valley Project) basins fall into this category. Other potential topics of congressional interest include emergency drought or flood legislation, private and public hydropower, water research and science investment and coordination, aging infrastructure, and environmental policy.