

## **ALERT: House version HR 1495 weakens NEPA procedures**

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I) reported HR 1495, The Water Resources Development Act of 2007, on March 15. The bill is controversial and flawed. It contains language that would “streamline” and thereby weaken National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provisions for Corps of Engineers projects. It reauthorizes many dozens of previously authorized pork barrel projects. It does *not* contain the peer review or mitigation reforms adopted by the Senate last year. Originally headed for speedy consideration in the House, the bill now has been held up until after the House returns from its spring recess on April 16.

NEPA procedures stress consensus building among agencies and public participation to develop unbiased analysis of alternatives under consideration without a favorite one dominating. Congress needs to give adequate funding to agencies so that NEPA procedures can be implemented properly and well coordinated.

### **How you can help:**

This House bill is expected to come to the floor in mid-April. Senate floor action also could occur in late April. NOW is the time to get in touch with your representative and senators.

The bill has not gone to the House Rules Committee yet, so we don't know what amendments will be in order when the bill is debated. The Senate bill is still being formulated. However, it's not too soon to let your representative and senators know your concerns about this bill.

Be sure to emphasize your concerns.

- Tell your House member how concerned you are to see that the NEPA streamlining provision in Sections 2027 and 2028 of the House bill could undermine the very spirit and intent of the NEPA law. Ask him or her to support floor amendments to strike the NEPA streamlining language from the House bill. If that fails, urge them to insist that the final conference agreement omits these NEPA changes.

### **How to contact your legislators:**

To send e-mail to your representative, go to <http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml>. Click on your representative's name, and then look for the “contact” box and follow the directions for sending e-mail.

To send e-mail to your senator, go to [http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm) and scroll to the senator's name. There you will see a “web form” address in red type. Click on that address and follow the directions for sending e-mail.

To telephone any representative: Call the Capitol switchboard: 202-224-3121. Ask for your legislator's office. When the phone is answered, say that you want to leave a message about upcoming legislation. A young aide will take the message or send you to the legislator's voice mail. This seems impersonal, but is nevertheless effective—legislators keep track of how many calls come in on different issues and the direction in which sentiment is running. Even a relatively small number of calls are enough to warrant serious consideration of the view expressed.