



Cultivating Conservation

MEMO

TO: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors and G. Patrick O'Dowd
FROM: Lisa Moore
RE: Federal Report
DATE: June 15, 2025

Reconciliation

Congress has been focused for the last several months on enacting Reconciliation legislation with the goal of sending a bill to the President by July 4. The House passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (HR 1) in late May, and the Senate is currently advancing similar legislation. A main focus of the legislation in the House and the Senate is to extend tax cuts approved in the first Trump administration.

Reconciliation allows Congress to change current law to align revenue and spending to conform with the budget resolution. Through this process, reconciliation instructions are included in a budget resolution. This directs committees to achieve particular budgetary goals. Committees then develop legislation to achieve those goals. That legislation is then joined together in an omnibus measure.

Unlike other legislation considered by the Senate, this reconciliation legislation may not be filibustered, meaning it can be adopted by a simple majority. Under Senate rules, the legislation may not include substantive provisions that have only a tangential budgetary impact. In the recent past, legislation adopted through this means included the Republican tax cuts and Biden's Inflation Reduction Act.

Nominations, Budget and Appropriations

The Senate nomination of Adam Telle to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works (Army Corps) was reported favorably from the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on June 11 and is pending on the Senate Calendar for full Senate consideration. We worked with Senator Padilla, who serves on the Committee and met with the nominee prior to his hearing, to underscore the importance of the Salton Sea Feasibility Study.

The Senate nomination of Andrea Travnicek to serve as Assistant Secretary of Interior for Water and Science, a key official with jurisdiction over the Colorado River, remains pending on the Senate Calendar awaiting full Senate consideration. On June 16, the President nominated Ted Cooke, formerly General Manager of the Central Arizona Project, to serve as Reclamation Commissioner. The nomination will be referred to the Senate Energy Committee for

consideration. Nominations typically take months to work through the Senate hearing and floor processes. The CRB states are well represented on the Senate Energy Committee, with all Basin States having a serving Senator, including California (Padilla).

The Senate Appropriations Committee is holding hearings on the President's FY26 budget request. In this connection, the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee held a hearing on June 11 on the requests for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, with Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Works Forsgren (Corps), Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Graham, and Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Works Cameron testifying.

The hearing largely focused on the Corps of Engineers with members pressing the Administration to support/increase funding. The President's budget request provides \$6.8 billion for the Corps, representing a \$2 billion reduction. The Bureau of Reclamation request provides \$1.2 billion for Reclamation, representing a reduction of \$609 billion. Congress is not legally bound by the President's budget and will exercise its own authority over funding via the FY26 annual appropriations process.