



## Cultivating Conservation

### MEMO

TO: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors and G. Patrick O'Dowd  
FROM: Lisa Moore  
RE: Federal Report  
DATE: September 18, 2025

#### **Appropriations**

Congress is facing a September 30 funding deadline and working to negotiate a continuing resolution to keep the government funded and avoid a shut down. The CR may fund the government through November 20 while work proceeds on annual appropriations legislation. The CR may include three appropriations bills that have moved through committee process on the Senate side and through the House (Agriculture, Legislative Branch and Military Construction-Veterans).

The Senate Energy and Water Appropriations bill, from which the Authority is seeking an earmark to meet a request by the Corps for additional funding for the Salton Sea Feasibility Study, has been stalled by a dispute between the ranking Democratic member (Murray) and Republican chair (Kennedy). Senator Kennedy is seeking to secure reductions in overall funding amounts in that bill.

It is possible that agreement will be reached on an overall funding amount for that bill that would enable it to be reconciled with the House Energy and Water Appropriations legislation that passed the House earlier this year. The legislation includes an additional \$2 million to the Bureau of Reclamation's Salton Sea account, bringing it to total of \$4 million. This increases Reclamation's capacity to facilitate work at the Salton Sea. The legislation also includes funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The bill includes \$200 million for Corps investigations which is the account from which the Corps funds the Salton Sea Feasibility Study.

We have secured funding for the study both through appropriations and through the Corps designating unallocated funding from this account to our project through its annual work plan. While we have secured funding for the study for FY26, the Corps recently indicated it had an additional capability (ability to spend) of \$1.76 million which we are pursuing through these two avenues (appropriations and work plan).

#### **Nominations**

This week, Majority Leader Thune is expected to execute a change to Senate rules which will allow certain nominations to be grouped together and voted on as a block. Currently, the Senate rules provide that nominations move individually. While the Senate Rules were changed to

prevent a filibuster of nominations (which required 60 votes to overcome, and thus support from the minority party), moving nominees individually by majority vote still takes time.

Historically, for lower level nominations, noncontroversial nominees moved as a group by unanimous consent (agreement of all Senators), removing the need to hold individual votes. During this administration, however, Democrats have withheld consent for all nominees, requiring the majority to proceed to each nominee individually. Because of the time it takes under Senate rules to bring up vote on nominees individually, there is a significant backlog of nominees awaiting action. This backlog includes the Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science nominee, Andrea Travnicek, who will have jurisdiction over Colorado River negotiations. (Ted Cooke, nominee for Reclamation Commissioner, has not completed the Committee process.)

The expected Senate rule change will allow lower level nominees, including Assistant Secretary level like Ms. Travnicek, to move in a package of nominations which will speed confirmations. Judicial and Secretary-level nominees are not expected to be included in this new process and should still require individual confirmation votes. It is possible that the Republicans and Democrats would arrive at a different compromise that will allow nominees to move more expeditiously without an actual rule change.