The following proposal is floating around the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee:

Sustainable Watershed Planning Act

The bill, without being made available to interested stakeholders, was scheduled for markup the first week of June 2009, but was abruptly pulled from the Agenda before being considered by the T&I Committee. The bill is likely to resurface and the APWA Water Resources Technical Committee is seeking input from the APWA Chapters to develop a position for lobbying efforts.

The bill proposes the following:

Under Title I of the proposed Act, the Council on Sustainable Watershed Management would be created and would require Federal agency membership at the Secretarial level for 9 Federal agencies. It would also have the participation of 5 Governors, a director, tribes, and other pertinent Federal agencies. Executive offices of the President could participate in deliberations as non-voting members. Additional personnel could also be hired, as well as experts and consultants, to carry out provisions of the Act. The Council may also employ voluntary assistance and staffs of Federal agencies. Funding under this title is established at $20 million a year.

The proposed Act would create regional watershed planning boards, under Title II, with representation required from 19 Federal departments or independent agencies, one representative from each state within the regional watershed, tribes, local governments, non-Federal entities, and interstate or even international participation, if appropriate. Upon approval of the Council, each regional watershed planning board is authorized to establish sub-regional watershed planning boards. Funding under this title is established at $50 million a year.

Under Title III, financial assistance is provided to the states, through grants, for comprehensive planning. Funds would be used to establish or enlarge a state office of watershed planning. Funding under this title is established at $25 million a year for 10 years.

Reports would be provided to the Council from the state offices of watershed planning to assist the Council in carrying out their functions. Sub-regional watershed planning boards would develop plans and submit them to the regional watershed planning board. Each regional watershed planning board would produce a watershed plan that provides a framework for conserving and utilizing the water resources of the watershed.

The Council would summarize the water resources uses and needs in each area from information provided by a regional watershed planning board. The Council would further provide a report to Congress biennially on the evaluation carried out. The Council would utilize the revised Army Corps of Engineers Principles and Guidelines, but also establish principles, standards, and procedures for the development of comprehensive regional watershed plans and for the formulation and evaluation of Federal water and related resource projects.
Please e-mail comments, pro and con, and I will forward to the national Water Resources Committee for consideration.

Sincerely,

\[Signature\]

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Water Resources Committee Liaison

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