



Waterways Council Lobbies for Capital Spending Plan

R.G. Edmonson | Feb 17, 2011 9:09PM GMT

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River operators visited congressional offices Wednesday to push for legislation

Ten months after the Army Corps of Engineers Inland Waterways Users Board adopted a strategic plan for infrastructure construction, river operators are trying to get Congress interested in putting it into law.

Members of the Waterways Council on Wednesday made more than 100 visits to congressional offices to discuss the Inland Waterways Capital Development Plan, which was created by a group composed of Corps professionals, river operators, and industries that depend on inland waterways transportation.

The plan would prioritize spending of some \$7 billion over 20 years for projects such as rehabilitation of existing locks and dams, and new construction for locks to accommodate longer tows. The plan would likely be included in a renewal of the Water Resources Development Act. Efforts to enact a 2010 WRDA fizzled last year as the 111th Congress wound down.

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"Our key message is that the Inland Waterways Capital Development Plan is a long-term solution that will help improve navigation, ensure that future projects are completed on time and within budget, and can be funded properly," said Richard (Rick) Calhoun, council chairman and president of Cargill Marine and Terminal in Minnetonka, Minn.

Rep. Harold Rogers, R-Ky., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, told the group that Congress recognized the growing importance of the waterways to the nation's economy.

"We have aging infrastructure that we all know we're going to have to address, and we're going to do all we can do to keep you in business," Rogers told the group. The council presented Rogers its annual leadership award.

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