

**Congress Returns:** With eight weeks left in the Congressional session, lawmakers confront two possible inflection points for a government shutdown (November 3 deadline to raise the debt ceiling and December 11 as the stopgap appropriations bill expires). They must also choose a new Speaker of the House.

**Mississippi Rural Water before House of Representatives on Fixing EPA:** MRWA Executive Director Kirby Mayfield is scheduled to appear before the [House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment](#) during its hearing on S. 611, legislation to fix the [EPA technical assistance funding problem](#). The following members are on the subcommittee: John Shimkus (IL), Gregg Harper (MS), Ed Whitfield (KY) Joe Pitts (PA), Tim Murphy (PA), Bob Latta (OH), David McKinley (WV), Bill Johnson (OH), Larry Bucshon (IN), Bill Flores (TX), Richard Hudson (NC), Kevin Cramer (ND), Fred Upton (MI), Paul Tonko (NY), Kurt Schrader (OR), Gene Green (TX), Diana DeGette (CO), Lois Capps (CA), Michael F. Doyle (PA), Jerry McNerney (CA), Tony Cardenas (CA), and Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ). North Dakota's Congressman on the panel contacted the North Dakota Rural Water Association last week about the hearing. We will be publishing talking points for state associations to share with members of the subcommittee and urging all panel members to make statements in support of their state rural water association and the bill ([S. 611](#)).

**NRWA Stands Up the SRF & House Committee Leaves WIFIA Out of Transportation Bill:** The House is planning to mark up [a long-term transportation funding bill](#) on Oct. 22. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee announced Wednesday that the long-awaited hearing will take place one week before the scheduled Oct. 29 expiration of the current law that authorizes the federal government's transportation spending. The House Committee proposal did not include the WIFIA provision to reform the limitation on use of tax-exempt financing in combination with WIFIA loans ([more](#)). The Senate passed a transportation bill earlier this summer that did include the WIFIA provision. NRWA has urged caution for Congress regarding WIFIA because the new funding program is designed to circumvent the SRFs' targeting for communities in the greatest need ([more](#)). If new federal funding is available to implement WIFIA, NRWA asks why is this new source of federal funding not available to the SRFs that fail to meet the current demand. If you would like to engage your [Representatives](#) on the House Transportation Committee in support of the SRFs and a better water funding policy, please contact [us](#).

**Changing the Clean Water SRF to Allow for Technical Assistance:** Last week, Louisiana Rural Water joined West Virginia and Minnesota

Rural Water in urging their Congressmen and Senators to support the change in the Clean Water SRF ([more](#)).

**DHS Circuit Riders:** Last week, Louisiana, Utah and Michigan Rural Water Associations briefed a number of Members of Congress on water topics including a need for a new circuit rider initiative to manage all the new emergency response and security issues facing water utilities.

**Too Much Rain in California, Mudslides and Chaos Offer a Preview of What El Niño Could Bring** ([LATimes](#)).

**WOTUS Update:** The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit has issued an order blocking EPA from implementing its Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) jurisdiction rule for the entire country while it decides whether it has authority to hear suits over the rule. The appeals court's order says challengers have shown "a substantial probability of success on the merits," citing flaws in how the rule defines a "significant nexus" between waterbodies and EPA and the Corps' alleged failure to give notice that it was considering many of the provisions included in their joint final rule.

**Wisc. Fight Over High-Capacity Wells:** Large farms and other high-capacity well users versus the environment and other property owners — Wisc. Senate committee takes action on bill to allow large wells to live on indefinitely by allowing their owners to rebuild them and move them slightly without permits ([more](#)).

**New Book by Disaster Recovery Expert Says Water Service is Most Important and Government Gets in the Way:** In a recent interview, a disaster recovery expert said, "Getting the sewer and wastewater system operating was the No. 1 priority." In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, he was worried about the outbreak of norovirus because of sanitation problems. But the sewer system wasn't his only problem... "[other] state officials provided no help and hindered recovery efforts. Competing governmental agencies set up their own command center and refused to provide any help ([more](#))."

**Towns Test Positive for E. Coli and Negative for Fecal:** Stoughton (Mass.) officials continue to test drinking water after testing positive for E.coli but did not detect any actual fecal contaminants ([more](#)).

**National Rural Water Association**

Contact: Mike Keegan, Policy Analyst <[keegan@ruralwater.org](mailto:keegan@ruralwater.org)>  
(Washington, DC)