

Federal Affairs Committee

Dec 2, 2025

3:30-5:00pm PST

Silver Pearl 3

Sheraton San Diego Resort & Marina

San Diego, California

Chair, Jolene Walsh

Vice-Chair, Scott Petersen

- I. Welcome & Call to Order, Jolene Walsh, Federal Affairs Committee Chair
- II. Introductions
- III. Approval of September 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes
- IV. ACWA Executive Update: Marwan Khalifa, Interim Executive Director
- V. ACWA State Update
- VI. Regulatory Update: Caleb Raspler
- VII. Congressional Update: Ian Lyle
- VIII. Legislative Update and Committee Voting Session: Libby Spekhardt / Ian Lyle
 - a. Drinking Water Subcommittee - Abby Schneider
 - i. Water Infrastructure Subcontractor and Taxpayer Protection Act of 2025 [\(H.R.1285\)](#) - Oppose (Subcommittee recommendation)
 - b. Infrastructure and Agriculture Subcommittee - Scott Petersen
 - i. Water Infrastructure Subcontractor and Taxpayer Protection Act of 2025 [\(H.R.1285\)](#) - Oppose (Subcommittee recommendation)
 - ii. Water Resources Technical Assistance Review Act [\(H.R.3427\)](#) - Favor (Subcommittee recommendation)
 - c. Water Supply Subcommittee – Mark Toy
 - i. Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act of 2025 [\(H.R.3717\)](#) - Support and amend (Subcommittee recommendation)
- IX. Policy development proposals (Requests for Assistance)
 - i. Expand the understanding of the cost of regulations (not in a silo) on water infrastructure development and identify potential funding or alternatives to mitigate.

- ii. NEPA streamlining
- iii. Wildfire Protection and Mitigation Funding including heli-hydrants
- iv. Expanding Access to WIFIA/CWIFP for Federal Projects
- v. Low Income Water Rate Assistance
- vi. Explore ways to mitigate impact of Section 232 steel & aluminum tariffs

X. 2026 Federal Affairs Activities

- a. DC Conference advocacy
- b. Monthly committee briefings

XI. National Coalition Update: Family Farm Alliance, National Waterways Conference, NESARC

XII. 2026 Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- a. Early January (specific date TBD once committee makeup confirmed)
- b. May 5, 2026 - ACWA Spring Conference – Sacramento, CA
- c. September (specific date TBD once committee makeup confirmed)
- d. December 1, 2026 – ACWA Fall Conference – Anaheim, CA

*Subcommittee meetings will take place a week or two prior; calendar invites will be sent for all meetings in January.

Water Infrastructure Subcontractor and Taxpayer Protection Act of 2025
(H.R.1285)

On February 13, 2025, Congressman Mike Bost (R-IL-02) introduced the Water Infrastructure Subcontractor and Taxpayer Protection Act of 2025.

The bill would add an additional step to the WIFIA process for projects. It would require construction payment and security (i.e. payment and performance bonds) for projects carried out with assistance from WIFIA loans for projects.

Specifically, no less than 50 percent of the total construction cost must be met in order to satisfy the payment and performance security criteria.

In 2023, ACWA took a support position on similar legislation. ACWA staff is asking the Federal Affairs Committee to reconsider and modify this position. Staff currently recommends a oppose position.

Bill proponents note that the Transportation Infrastructure Finance & Innovation Act (TIFIA) program has a payment an security requirement, and that WIFIA was based off the TIFIA program. ACWA staff perspective is that WIFIA loans are less risky than transportation loans because water projects have secure and established revenue streams (water rates).

ACWA recognizes that federal statutes under the WIFIA program have existing requirements for applicants to demonstrate creditworthiness and reasonable assurance for loan repayments. It is our position that requiring water systems to adhere to additional payment and performance securities at the project construction level to obtain a WIFIA loan is burdensome, delays construction timelines, and would unnecessarily increase costs for critical water infrastructure.

Subcommittee Recommendation: Oppose

Water Resources Technical Assistance Review Act ([H.R.3427](#))

On May 15, 2025, Congressman David Taylor (R-OH-02) introduced the Water Resources Technical Assistance Review Act. The legislation passed through the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee by a vote of 61-3 and through the U.S. House of Representatives by voice vote. It has been referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

The Water Technical Assistance Review Act directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review the technical assistance authority, initiatives, and programs of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that are related to clean water infrastructure. GAO must submit a report to Congress on the review, which must include any recommendations to improve covered technical assistance.

The review would also include:

- a description of the covered technical assistance available to states, tribes, local governments, and nongovernmental organizations, including activities and actions carried out during the previous five years
- an assessment of the needs of economically distressed communities eligible to receive assistance under an EPA clean water infrastructure program that are not addressed through covered technical assistance.

Further, the EPA must submit a compliance plan to Congress annually for five years on any actions taken by the EPA to comply with GAO's recommendations.

Subcommittee Recommendation: Favor

Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act of 2025 (H.R.3717)

The golden mussel was discovered in the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta in October 2024. This discovery is the first known citing golden mussels in North America. The golden mussel is native to China and Southeast Asia. It is an invasive species in California. Habitat conditions in California are favorable to the golden mussel, which has a rapid reproduction and growth rate. These factors make it a threat to water infrastructure and native species.

On June 4, 2025, Congressman Josh Harder (D-CA-09) introduced the Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act of 2025 (H.R. 3717) to help address the threat posed by golden mussels.

The bill establishes a golden mussel demonstration program within the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) program, which was established by Congress through the passage of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act in 1990. Additionally, the bill would authorize \$15 million annually for the ANS Task Force, co-chaired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish a grant program and carry out activities related to the eradication of the golden mussel species from fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

The ANS Task Force will establish a grant program with two primary focuses:

- Identify effective technologies and mechanisms to control and remove golden mussels from waterways and a variety of structures including: water intakes, conveyance infrastructure, fish screens, boat hulls, and other areas where the golden mussel may be found; or
- Provide an understanding of the biology of the golden mussel and effective containment science with respect to the golden mussel.

The ANS Task Force may transfer responsibility of all or part of the implementation of a control or eradication method or plan developed under the demonstration program to a Federal agency, State, port authority from any United States ports of entry, local government agency, and regional and other entities, if it determines that:

- The entity has the necessary authority, jurisdiction, and expertise; and
- Delegation would be more efficient or effective than retaining the responsibility itself.

If authorized, the demonstration program will be implemented in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and any other waters of the United States the Task Force determines are infested, or likely to become infested, by the golden mussel.

Subcommittee Recommendation: Support and amend

Minutes ACWA
Federal Affairs Committee
September 16, 2025
10:00 Pacific/1:00 Eastern
Virtual only – hosted on Zoom

Meeting Called to Order

ACWA Federal Affairs Committee Chair Jolene Walsh called the meeting to order at 10:01 Pacific.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the Federal Affairs Committee's May 13, 2025, meeting were reviewed and approved by voice vote.

Updates

Congressional Update - Ian Lyle provided an overview covering some of the recent actions in the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Information included an update on the ACWA supported FEMA Act passing out of the House T&I Committee as well as an overview of the House passed Energy and Water Appropriations bill. There was also a broader discussion about appropriations and the possibility of a federal government shutdown.

State Update- Chelsea Haines gave an overview highlighting ACWA's work on state advocacy including the status of ACWA sponsored legislation and state regulatory activity.

ACWA Updates – ACWA Interim Executive Director Marwan Khalifa provided an update on general ACWA activities including the status of the Executive Director recruitment and upcoming ACWA events. ACWA Deputy Executive Director Cindy Tuck informed the Committee that she will be retiring from ACWA on November 7th. Members of the Federal Affairs Committee thanked Cindy for her great work and service to ACWA and the California water community.

Regulatory Update: Caleb Raspler provided a summary of recent federal regulatory developments. His comments included discussion of the administration's Spring 2025 Unified Agenda which was released on September 5th. The Unified Agenda provides public notice of anticipated regulatory actions including: WOTUS revision, an expected extension to EPA's PFAS compliance deadline and NPDES permit applications, as well as expected action on the Endangered Species Act. Mr. Raspler also mentioned ACWA's comments on the proposed USDA reorganization.

The Federal Affairs Committee reviewed and adopted positions on 11 bills as noted below:

Drinking Water and Energy: Chair – Abby Schneider

- H.R.4733 - Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Establishment Act – Support
- H.R.2388 - Water Infrastructure Modernization Act – Favor
- H.R.1549 - Water Security Enhancement Act – Support

Infrastructure and Agriculture: Chair – Scott Peterson

- H.R.4879 - Emergency Rural Water Response Act - Support
- S.2597/H.R.4854 - Saving the Department of the Interior's Workforce Act - Watch
- H.R.2308 - Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act - Support
- H.R.3838 - Promoting Efficient Review for Modern Infrastructure Today (PERMIT) Act of 2025 – Watch

Water Supply: Chair – Mark Toy

- S.2596/H.R.4853 - Saving the Forest Service's Workforce Act - Watch
- H.R.4181 - Wildfire Infrastructure and Landowner Tax Relief (WILTR) Act – Favor
- H.R.3889 - National Prescribed Fire Act - Favor
- H.R.1105 - Disaster Resiliency and Coverage Act – Favor

Other Items:

Staff discussed a request for information about transportation costs that are tied to water infrastructure projects. Scott Petersen provided an overview of an effort to potentially secure funding tied to this type of project in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization.

Partner Organization Updates:

Family Farm Alliance: Scott Petersen gave an update on Family Farm Alliance Activities including the transition of Dan Keppen as Executive Director to Samantha Barncastle. Mr. Petersen also noted the Alliance is making progress on regulatory reform efforts with the Bureau of Reclamation. Mr. Petersen and Mr. Lyle also noted that the Family Farm Alliance is conducting a Farmer lobbyist advocacy trip to Washington DC this week. Both Mr. Petersen and Mr. Lyle are participating in the trip. The Family Farm Alliance will hold its Annual Convention in Reno at the end of October.

NESARC: Jordan Smith gave an update on ESA activities including work on an ESA reform bill developed by Natural Resources Committee Chairman Westerman and potential actions by the Administration to release ESA revisions before the end of the year.

National Waterways Conference (NWC): Ian Lyle discussed recent efforts by NWC related to re-establishing the Water Subcabinet and outreach to the Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Lyle will attend the NWC Annual Conference in Norfolk, VA September 23-25.

Upcoming Meetings: The next meeting of ACWA's Federal Affairs Committee will take place on December 2, 2025 in person at ACWA's Fall Conference.

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 Pacific Time.

**Attendance ACWA Federal Affairs Committee Meeting
September 16, 2025**

FAC Committee Members Attendance:

Adam Robin
Alexandra Berenter
Alicia Harasty
Andrew DeGraca
Brad Sherwood
Brandy Swisher
Cristel Tufenkjian
G. Patrick O'Dowd
Harvey Ryan
Jolene Walsh
Josh Weimer, TID
Larry McKenney
Marion Champion
Mark Toy
Meggan Quarles
Michael Hadley
Nicholas Schneider
Nicole Dorotinsky
Sarah Starr
Scott Petersen

Federal Affairs Committee Excused Absences:

Abby Schneider
Anthony Fellow
Ara Azhderian
Dana Ferreira
Jaff Payne
Rebecca Guo
Scott Ratterman
Thomas McCarthy

Federal Affairs Committee Guests in Attendance:

Adam Borchard
Angela Ebiner
Brooke White
Camille Bianchini
Cathy Green
Chelsea Haines
Christopher Keosian
Cindy Tuck
Deanna Jackson
Deanna Sereno
Drake Wood
Eric Grubb
Erin Sasse

Ernie Avila
Everhart, Maisha
Fabiola Moreno
G. Patrick O'Dowd
Glenn Farrel
Greg Morrison, NWRA
Greg Zlotnick
Harvey Ryan
Heather Baez
Ian Lyle ACWA
Ilene Ramirez
Jacqueline Howells
Jason Uhley
Jennifer Allen
Jennifer Rotz
Joe Sturges
Jordan Smith
Katherine Kleinman
Katie Dahl
Lee Hernandez
Libby Spekhardt
Madeline Voitier
Mark Smith
Marwan Khalifa
Rem Scherzinger
Nadia Webster
Nick Russell
Rachel Murphy
River Nguyen
Scott Richardson
Steve LaMar
Victoria Llort
Vince Gin
Will Holbert