

Water Utility Council

National AWWA's Fly-In (meetings with state Congressional representatives) is April 17-18.

Representing the Nebraska Section AWWA at this year's fly-in are Water Quality Council members **Jerry Obrist**, Lincoln Water System, and **Jim Shields**, Metropolitan Utilities District.

Below are the issues they are discussing with Nebraska Congressional Representatives:

ISSUE: Infrastructure: Reauthorize and significantly expand the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee recently approved a bill to reauthorize and expand the Clean Water State Revolving Fund for a total of \$14 billion through FY2011.

Democratic and Republican staff on the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction for drinking water, have told us they would like to reauthorize the SRF at the same level if there is support from the drinking water community. This level of funding is consistent with funding we have supported in the past and is easily supported by our estimate of the capital needs facing drinking water systems (\$250 billion over 30 years).

ISSUE: Farm Bill: Increase funding and better focus on protecting water sources.

The omnibus Farm Bill is up for reauthorization. It has a number of conservation programs that can be used to protect drinking water sources. It also has programs to facilitate partnerships in watershed protection activities.

We want to see conservation programs better funded within Farm Bill allocations and better focused on protecting sources of drinking water. We also want utilities to be eligible for grants to coordinate/facilitate watershed protection programs.

ISSUE: Appropriations: Support appropriations for AWWA Research Foundation, state drinking water programs, the drinking water SRF program, WaterISAC, EPA drinking water research and the wastewater SRF program.

In the past, the AWWA Research Foundation (AwwaRF) has received a modest federal earmark that is leveraged by foundation subscriptions to provide needed research on drinking water issues. Those funds were significantly

reduced two years ago and should be restored.

Although this is technically an earmark, earmarks have not been made out of order in the new Congress, and there is no problem asking for one. Earmarks need to go through the Appropriations Committee process.

In addition to AwwaRF funding, AWWA supports appropriation to a number of regular appropriation accounts, including funds for state programs, the drinking water SRF, WaterISAC, EPA drinking water research and the clean water SRF.

We want full funding for AwwaRF's requested earmark (\$5 million); \$112 million for state drinking water programs; \$1 billion for the drinking water SRF; \$2 million for WaterISAC; \$48 million for EPA drinking water research, and \$1.35 billion for the clean water SRF.