



**CWSF**  
COUNCIL OF WESTERN  
STATE FORESTERS

## Legislative & Policy Update – April 2017

PUBLISHED APRIL 26, 2017

The [Council of Western State Foresters \(CWSF\) Legislative & Policy Update](#) provides information on issues of importance to the CWSF. Policy and Legislative Updates are found on the CWSF webpage [here](#). Please note that the items highlighted in these updates are only a selection of the issues the CWSF and Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) are monitoring. Keep an eye out for our monthly newsletter that will provide summaries on other key legislative and programmatic issues. If you have not yet subscribed, you can do so [here](#).

This month's policy update provides a summary of recent activity on fiscal year 2017 appropriations, the vote on President Trump's nominee for the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, and the Waters of the United States Rule.

For more information, please contact Kelsey Delaney, Policy Director, 303.893.0327, [kdelaney@westernforesters.org](mailto:kdelaney@westernforesters.org).

### Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Appropriations

Congress has until April 28 to pass spending legislation for the remainder of FY 2017. The current Continuing Resolution, or CR, ([P.L. 114-254](#)) concludes on April 28 and the passage of a new spending bill is needed to keep the federal government open. Both Republican and Democratic leaders, and the Administration have said they want to avoid a government shutdown. Details are still becoming available as Congress moves to complete negotiations and advance a spending measure. It remains unknown what form the final appropriations legislation will take. The likelihood of another short-term CR continues to increase which would allow for lawmakers to finalize negotiations on the larger spending package. Issues that have complicated the discussions are the Administration's interest in providing funds for a U.S. - Mexico border wall, military spending, and Democrats request to continue certain health care subsidies.

CWSF, the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters and the Southern Group of State Foresters continue to assist the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) on appropriations issues. View the latest information on [NASF's appropriations priority programs](#).

### Secretary of Agriculture

The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry held a confirmation hearing in late March to consider President Trump's nomination of former Georgia Governor, Sonny Perdue, to serve as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. The Committee shortly thereafter voted to approve Secretary Perdue's nomination. All but one Senator present during the vote supported the nomination and Senator David Perdue - who is an extended family member of Secretary Perdue - abstained. Upon returning from the two-week spring recess, the full Senate took up consideration of the nomination and voted 87-11 to confirm Secretary Perdue as the

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. The U.S. Department of Agriculture issued a [press release](#) after Secretary Perdue took the oath of office. NASF also issued a [statement](#).

## **Waters of the United States**

Action continues on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule. As mentioned in the [CWSF February Newsletter Policy Update](#), the Supreme Court agreed to hear and reconsider an appellate court decision on jurisdiction over WOTUS litigation. Later that month, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) titled, [“Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the ‘Waters of the United States’ Rule.”](#) The EO directs the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers to review the WOTUS rule and “publish for notice and comment a proposed rule rescinding or revising the rule, as appropriate and consistent with law.” Shortly thereafter, the Administration submitted to the Supreme court a request to suspend the lawsuit over the question of jurisdiction, citing the President’s EO. In early April, the Supreme Court denied the Administration’s request and is continuing to move forward with the determination about whether district courts or appellate courts have the jurisdiction to hear WOTUS litigation.