

Water resources policy: issues for the new administration

Neil S. Grigg¹

Civil Engineering Department, Colorado State University, Fort Collins

Abstract. The incoming US administration will receive policy advice in all sectors, including the water sector, which is often lumped with the environmental sector in policy forums. The water sector also intersects significantly with the infrastructure, health, and energy sectors. Global and national trends that impact these sectors include population, globalization, climate change, energy, and the financial crisis. Among the many issues confronting them, US political leaders must find paths to sustainable development and to maintenance of ongoing levels of service in water subsectors, such as drinking water, wastewater management, flood control, irrigation, and instream uses of water. These paths must be found while leaders also consider security risks from natural and man-made sources. The paper will draw from selected policy studies and advice to the new administration to select key elements of water policy and gaps that have been identified. These will include key issues such as water scarcity, aging infrastructure, and climate-induced flooding. The paper will outline the major needs for action where consensus exists among policy groups in distinct policy categories. It will point out where new programs are likely to emerge and where business and career opportunities are likely to improve in the next five to ten years.

¹ Civil and Environmental Engineering Department
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1372
Tel: (970) 491-3369
e-mail: neilg@engr.colostate.edu