Weekly Legislative Update
Week of March 18, 2014

Congressional Outlook

Week of March 18th

The House and Senate are in recess this week, and will return next Monday, March 24. We apologize for the delayed report, but our DC office was closed yesterday due to yet another snow storm.

Week in Review

Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Bill Goes to President

On Thursday, March 13, the Senate quickly passed the House version of the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2013 (H.R.3370). The vote was placed on the Senate calendar at the last minute and received a final vote of 72-22. The bill had previously been cleared by the House on March 4 by a vote of 306-91. The final bill came after months of negotiations amongst leaders in both chambers as they worked to provide relief to homeowners impacted by the steep flood insurance rate increases under the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012. The bill moved from the Senate to the White House where it is expected to be signed into law by the President. Prior to final passage, TFG prepared a review of the bill and a comparison to BW-12 that shows how the changes in the bill will impact property owners.

House Passes Water Rights Legislation

The House last week passed a Republican bill that would prohibit the government from requiring that private water rights be transferred to the federal government as a condition of permitting public land uses, including recreation, grazing and energy development. The bill, H.R. 3189 passed 238-174 with 12 Democrats joining all Republicans in support of the measure. For more,
House Hearing on Marketplace Fairness Act - No Consensus on Best Approach

Last Wednesday, the House Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the Marketplace Fairness Act (passed in the Senate last year). Overall, the panel unanimously agreed that remote sellers should collect sales tax like brick-and-mortar stores have to. However, the differences lie in how those sales taxes will be collected. The panel was essentially divided between supporters of the MFA approach, and those who support origin-based taxing. The panel admitted there are pitfalls to all approaches, but the question remains which approach promotes market fairness, protects businesses, and protects state and local tax sovereignty best?

New ACA Exemptions as March 31 Deadline Approaches

Last week the Obama Administration announced additional exemptions to the individual mandate to carry health insurance.

Congressional Schedule

The House and Senate are in recess.