



NARC National Association of Regional Councils

TALKING POINTS

ENVIRONMENT

BUILDING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES – LARGE, SMALL, URBAN AND RURAL – THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) is committed to creating and promoting regional environmental programs and related tools in the areas of air quality, brownfields, green infrastructure and landcare, water quality, climate change and greenhouse gas and energy to create safe and sustainable communities.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING:** Regional Councils have been involved in environmental planning for more than three decades, which includes watershed planning, river studies, solid waste management planning, air quality and brownfields redevelopment. Environmental quality is unconcerned with municipal boundaries – polluted rivers, streams and air flow across city, county and state lines.
- **AIR QUALITY:** Regional Councils are responsible for meeting various mobile source air quality standards and are important stakeholders to include in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) discussions regarding standardization changes, which directly impact the local and regional levels. Regional councils require an easing of conformity planning requirements – thereby making it easier and more cost effective to maintain the standards. Congress should look into revising of the Clean Air Act to take these ideas into consideration.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE:** Climate change and global warming are real issues with negative impacts to the environmental and economic survivability of our communities. Actions need to be taken at all levels of government to ensure that climate change is addressed through strong policies and clear cut reductions in emissions and energy consumption. This includes increased funding to multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations in order to comply and maintain compliance with the Clean Air Act; development and application of technologies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and, and the institution of incentive-based programs for localities and regions to create solutions that will protect environmental standards and needs.
- **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE:** Regional Councils are critical to the green infrastructure movement because of their comprehensive multifaceted planning capabilities, convening stakeholders, conducting strategic planning, and implementing projects to accomplish sustainable outcomes to identify critical opportunities for conservation, restoration and preservation. Green infrastructure planning and development action at the regional level will have positive environmental benefits nationally.
- **WATER RESOURCES:** The quality and the quantity of our water supply are critical to our nation's future. According to a recent poll, nine out of ten Americans believe safe and clean water is a national priority that deserves federal investment. Regional councils play a large and diverse role in water resource planning and require federal assistance and funding for planning, technical assistance, and responding to emerging water issues. This includes exploring the establishment of a federal Water Infrastructure Trust Fund. It is necessary for water infrastructure projects and environmental actions to include the regional perspective.
- **ENERGY:** The development of a comprehensive and integrated national energy policy that addresses energy independence is necessary for continued and sustained economic growth and healthy communities. Regional Councils are a key element in executing national energy policies and technologies at the local levels. Rural and urban areas are impacted by the effects of energy production and consumption, whether it is biofuels on a corn farm in Iowa or the flow of freight on rail and truck out of the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.