



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

### Overview

The budget resolution that sets up a repeal of the health care law is on track to be adopted by both chambers of Congress this week — with the Senate planning its marathon voting session mid-week and the House preparing for a floor vote before leaving town Friday.

On Wednesday, U.S. Transportation Secretary-designate Elaine Chao will have her confirmation hearing with the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. Chao has indicated priorities of enforcing safety rules, focusing on planning and acquisition practices, evaluating new infrastructure technology, decreasing regulatory burdens, and improving equity between urban and rural areas. Chao's confirmation process is expected to go smoothly and without controversy. NARC will have updates on the Chao nomination later in the week.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will hold a nomination hearing for General John Kelly's nomination to head the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. With immigration so integral to the campaign and the attack at Fort Lauderdale Airport last week, Senators will be asking about Transportation Security Administration checkpoints and the immigration visa programs.

There are several other nomination hearings this week, including:

- Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) for U.S. Attorney General
- Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State
- Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education
- Representative Mike Pompeo (R-KS) for Central Intelligence Agency Director
- James Mattis for Secretary of Defense

- Ben Carson for Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- Wilbur Ross for Secretary of Commerce
- Andrew Puzder for Secretary of Labor

With less than two weeks before President-elect Trump takes office, attention is turning from appointments to what will be accomplished during the new administration's first 100 days. While Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure package has received a lot of attention, **top lawmakers say** this will not be an immediate priority.

### **Secretary Foxx Exit Memo**

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx released his *Cabinet Exit Memo* today, highlighting his time in office and record of progress. Foxx focuses on the advancements in technology, such as automated vehicles and connected infrastructure, and ways USDOT has assisted in their deployment through the Smart City Challenge and Federal Automated Vehicle Policy. He emphasizes the importance of safety and ways USDOT has improved aviation safety, including drone policy, with the Federal Aviation Administration. The Secretary closes with his vision for the future: calling for better funding, continued focus on technology advancement, and using transportation to address economic inequality.

### **Tax Exemption for Municipal Bonds**

As the new administration and Congress take office and highlight tax reform on their agenda, state and local governments have joined together to encourage continued support for tax-exempt municipal bonds amid fears that this key infrastructure finance tool might again be targeted as a source of revenue. NARC has joined with the Public Finance Network to urge Congress to continue the tax exemption for municipal bonds, which fund nearly 75% of all public infrastructure financing. Tax-exempt municipal bonds have financed more than \$2 trillion in new infrastructure investments over the past ten years and are on a path to finance another \$2 trillion in the next ten years.

Tax-exempt municipal bonds have been used to finance repairs to and construction of: roads, highways, and bridges; public transportation; seaports and marine terminals; airports; water and wastewater facilities; elementary schools, high schools, and colleges and universities; acute care hospitals; single- and multi-family housing; libraries; parks; town halls; electric power and natural gas facilities; and other public projects. Both NACo and NLC have included municipal bonds as part of their 2017 legislative priorities.

### **NTSB Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements**

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) unveiled its new most wanted list of transportation safety improvements. The list spans two years, 2017 and 2018, to allow more time to advocate for and make progress on these very challenging issues. The items on the list address a variety of issues that, if addressed, can significantly improve transportation safety. The new list includes:

- Reduce Fatigue-Related Accidents
- Expand Recorder Use to Enhance Safety
- Increase Implementation of Collision Avoidance Technologies
- Strengthen Occupant Protection
- Eliminate Distractions
- Prevent Loss of Control in Flight in General Aviation
- Ensure the Safe Shipment of Hazardous Materials
- End Alcohol and Other Drug Impairment in Transportation
- Require Medical Fitness
- Improve Rail Transit Safety Oversight

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **NLC Report on Smart Cities**

Last week, the National League of Cities (NLC) released *Trends in Smart City Development*, a new report featuring case studies about how five cities — Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Charlotte, N.C., and New Delhi, India — are implementing smart city projects from different

approaches. The report also provides recommendations to help local governments consider and plan smart city projects.

### **NRN, ICMA Launch Broadband Resource Guide for Local Governments**

The National Resource Network (NRN) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) launched *Access and Inclusion in the Digital Age*, the first broadband resource guide developed by and for local governments to address the digital divide in their communities. It provides useful information to support communities in engaging with potential partners, finding funding, and measuring and managing the performance of new or existing programs and initiatives. As a living document, it is a dynamic repository of best practices and will be updated regularly with new information from the original six cities, as well as any other communities in the process of expanding broadband access and digital inclusion.

### **CESA's Sustainable Solar Education Project Releases New Guide on Solar Loan Programs**

States and municipalities can play an important role in spurring local lending for residential rooftop PV installations. To help inform state and municipal officials about best practices and the various approaches to opening up the lending marketplace for residential solar, the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) has published a guide titled *Publicly Supported Solar Loan Programs: A Guide for States and Municipalities*. The guide, authored by Travis Lowder of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), describes general factors state and municipal governments should consider when assessing whether to launch a public solar loan program, explains various loan program design elements, and offers several case studies. See webinar information below.

## **REGION SPOTLIGHT**

### **Uber Movement**

Uber is releasing data to cities to be launched on the website Uber Movement, which will provide valuable information on the transportation network and allow communities a more robust view of traffic patterns.

### **ETCOG Awarded for Excellence in Financial Reporting for Fifteenth Consecutive Year**

The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) for 2015. This certificate of achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

### **Upcoming Peer Exchanges**

Join NARC for two different peer exchange groups during the 2017 National Conference of Regions in February! NARC intends for these meetings to initiate a network of peer-to-peer learning and best practice sharing.

For the Energy and Environment Group, the meeting will be our second convening of environmental and energy directors from regional COGs across the country, following our initial session at the Executive Directors Conference in South Bend. If you are interested in participating, please email Cameron Herbolsheimer ([cameron@narc.org](mailto:cameron@narc.org)) with the proper contact for your organization.

For communications and public affairs directors, this will be the kick-off meeting for a NARC Communications Committee. We want this initial convening to spearhead future efforts and engagement among member communications and public affairs directors. If you are interested in participating, please email Anna Rosenbaum ([anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org)) with the proper contact for your organization.

## **FEATURED JOBS**

*View full list of jobs!*

## **Department Director of Communications**

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

## **Director of Regional Data & Mapping**

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, Ohio

## **Associate Planner – Planning & Environment**

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, Ohio

## **Notice of Solicitation: RFQ No. 17-01**

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, Title VI Programs And Limited English Proficiency Plan And Title VI Environmental Justice Reviews of Plans & Programs  
Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

## **Transportation Planner**

Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments, Cincinnati, OH

## **Transportation Planner II**

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Kelso, WA

## **FUNDING**

*[View full list of grants!](#)*

## **EVENTS**

*[View full list of events!](#)*

### **NLC Webinar on How ADA Requirements Affect Your City**

January 12, 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET

A national trend away from jailing people with mental illness and substance disorders continues to gain momentum. In addition to the evidence of harm to the individual, law enforcement, community, and public safety, cities have yet another reason to keep people with behavioral health needs out of jail: the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA places an obligation on government entities to provide mental health services in the most integrated setting appropriate for the individual. Jails are rarely that setting, but have become the default places for mental health services for many Americans. A community's lack of appropriate services does not remove this responsibility. This webinar will provide a primer on the ADA's application to law enforcement and highlight two examples of how San Antonio and Seattle have met this obligation.

### **Designing Publicly Supported Solar Loan Programs**

January 12, 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET

States and municipalities can play an important role in spurring local lending for residential rooftop PV installations. To help inform state and municipal officials about best practices and the various approaches to opening up the lending marketplace for residential solar, CESA has published a guide titled ***Publicly Supported Solar Loan Programs: A Guide for States and Municipalities***. The guide, authored by Travis Lowder of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), describes general factors state and municipal governments should consider when assessing whether to launch a public solar loan program, explains various loan program design elements, and offers several case studies. In this webinar, Travis Lowder will provide an overview of the new program guide. There will be time to address questions from the audience. This webinar is free but registration is required.

### **How MPOs Use CMAQ Funding for Alternative Fuel Vehicle and Infrastructure Projects**

January 18, 1:00 - 2:30 PM ET

There are many types of projects eligible for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program funding. Hear from two Metropolitan Planning Organizations about using CMAQ funding for alternative fuel vehicle projects. Jim Stack from Genesee Transportation Council will describe partnering with a Clean Cities coalition to support the deployment of nearly 150 propane, compressed natural gas (CNG), and electric drive vehicles. By partnering with Genesee Region Clean Communities, the program benefited from a fuel neutral organization's

knowledge about the new technologies and relationships with the private sector. Jeff Sheffield from North Florida Transportation Planning Organization will talk about hosting the North Florida Clean Fuels Coalition and the importance of alternative fuel vehicles in their region. By utilizing CMAQ funding, they have installed electric vehicle charging stations, helped convert a county fleet to CNG, and purchased CNG conversion kits for sanitation trucks.

### **Testing Messages to Support the Decennial Census and American Community Survey**

January 18, 4:00 PM ET

The Census Project, the Association of Public Data Users and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights are co-sponsoring a webinar to unveil the results of a new national opinion survey on the use of effective messages in support of the 2020 Census and the companion American Community Survey. The polling results are especially relevant in light of the challenging political environment. Registrants for this webinar will receive advance materials and polling results, including a general population survey as well as samples of African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders and Latinos.

### **Draft Agenda Available! 2017 National Conference of Regions**

*February 12-15 – Washington Court Hotel, 525 New Jersey Ave NW Washington, DC*

The National Conference of Regions is NARC's forum to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda for the year ahead, targeting topics central to our members' missions and their local elected officials' focus. Additional information will be available soon. Capitol Hill Day is the final day of the conference, February 15, 2017.

## **CONTACT US**

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