



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

### **An Update on the Shutdown**

As of press time, the federal government has been closed for more than two days. Hundreds of thousands of government workers and tens of thousands of private contractors have been furloughed. The U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, and the Internal Revenue Service are at a virtual standstill.

But there may be hope. Senate Republicans and Senate Democrats ironed out an agreement to get Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) legislation to the Senate floor before the pending short-term continuing resolution expires on February 8, which allowed the Senate to pass – in a 81 to 18 vote – the fourth continuing resolution to fund the federal government this fiscal year. If the House is able to pass the measure, the federal government will be able to resume normal operation again very soon.

The bill includes a six-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), but does not include disaster relief funds for Puerto Rico, raising the caps for defense and non-defense discretionary programs, nor permanent protections for DREAMers in the DACA program.

It appears that both sides will be able to declare victory. Republicans can say that they did not back down from their initial position, which was to oppose adoption of a budget to keep the government open that included a DACA provision. Democrats can claim that while no DACA solution was part of this legislation, Republicans have committed to adopting legislation that will protect DREAMers from deportation within the next 17 days. Failure to do so could result in another government shutdown if Democrats refuse to pass another funding bill because no DACA plan was adopted.

## **State and Local Jurisdictions Step Up to Fill Federal Void During Shutdown**

Although the congressional impasse continues, some state and local jurisdictions are stepping up where they can to fill the federal void. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced over the weekend that the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island would remain open. Arizona Governor Doug Ducey pledged state resources to ensure that the Grand Canyon National Park would stay open to the public. District of Columbia's Mayor Muriel Bowser also stated that D.C. would assume some of the responsibility from the National Park Service, emptying trash containers along the National Mall.

## **As Shutdown Continues, CHIP Hangs in the Balance**

It has been more than 100 days since Congress let the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) expire. Until Congress resolves the federal shutdown, CHIP is threatened by a significant lapse in its funding. Earlier today the Senate passed another short-term spending bill that would extend CHIP's funding for six years at current levels, but the House still needs to vote before we know the outcome for CHIP. If Congress does not reach a deal on CHIP by the end of January, ten states – Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio, and Washington – and D.C. are expected to run out of program funding. Some of these states will try using their own funding to keep CHIP running for as long as they can, but others may have to stop coverage for children and pregnant women and/or freeze enrollment.

## **House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Introduces Ten Broadband Infrastructure Bills**

Early last week, Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) and Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Chairman Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) co-wrote an op-ed announcing a series of upcoming bills related to nationwide broadband infrastructure. This action follows an **executive order issued by the president** on January 8 to streamline and expedite requests to locate broadband facilities in rural America. The ten bills were introduced in three buckets: **removing barriers to infrastructure build out**, **supporting innovation**, and **strengthening the public safety benefits that come with access to broadband internet**.

## **EPA Schedules Listening Sessions on Proposed Repeal of Clean Power Plan**

*February 21 – Kansas City, MO*

*February 28 – San Francisco, CA*

*March 27 – Gillette, WY*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced three new public listening sessions on the proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan, noted above. "In response to significant interest surrounding the proposed repeal of the Clean Power Plan and the success of the West Virginia hearing, we will now hold listening sessions across the country to ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input," said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt.

With the publication of an upcoming Federal Register notice, EPA will re-open the public comment period for the proposed repeal through April 26 and provide further details on the listening sessions. Written statements and supporting information submitted while the public comment period is open will be considered with the same weight as oral comments and supporting information presented at the listening sessions. Comments should be identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0355 and may be submitted by one of the methods listed on the Clean Power Plan Proposed Repeal: How to Comment web page. Pre-registration to provide an oral presentation will begin when the notice is published in the Federal Register and close one week prior to each session.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **Amazon Narrows List to 20 Cities for HQ2**

Amazon received 238 applications from communities across the U.S. competing for Amazon's second headquarters, and has since narrowed the list to 20. Amazon will spend the next few months evaluating these proposals and determining whether these cities can handle the influx of new jobs. They expect to make a final decision by the end of the year. Amazon plans to invest more than \$5 billion in their second headquarters location, generating thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity for the chosen city's region.

## **SNAP Linked with Improved Nutritional Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs**

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities released a **report** last week that highlighted the growing benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). By enabling 42 million Americans to buy healthy food every month, SNAP is helping provide food security to low-income citizens and offers a path to better health. Some of the value for low-income Americans that research has supported include:

- Participants report better health than low-income non-participants;
- SNAP participation in early childhood is linked to better health in adulthood;
- Elderly SNAP participants are less likely to cut back on their medications due to cost than SNAP-eligible non-participants; and
- Adults in SNAP incur \$1,400 – nearly 25 percent – less in medical care costs than low-income non-participants.

## **NASA, NOAA Report that Long-Term Warming Trend Continued in 2017**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) reported this week that Earth's global surface temperatures in 2017 ranked as the second warmest since 1880. In a **separate, independent analysis**, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists concluded that 2017 was the third warmest year on record. The differences in ranking between the agencies is attributed to different methods of measurement, but they agree that the Earth is in a long-term warming trend. Both of their analyses show that five of the hottest years on record have happened since 2010.

## **REGION SPOTLIGHT**

### **Drinking Water 1-2-3: A Guide for Local Officials and Community Leaders**

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) in Chicago, Illinois recognizes that water supply issues have the potential to affect our public health and safety, regional economic growth, and fragile ecosystems in the long-term. To help local leaders take action, they have created **Drinking Water 1-2-3: A Guide for Local Officials and Community Leaders**. MPC explains that the how-to guide is designed to help local leaders understand “the key aspects of water management and critical questions to discuss with your water system managers and engineers, municipal planners, public works officials, finance directors, developers, residents and businesses.” Although the guide is geared towards decision makers in Northeastern Illinois, local leaders across the country can act and apply any or all the recommendations to their own communities today.

## **REGIONS LEAD**

Visit [www.regionslead.org](http://www.regionslead.org) to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too. Please send contributions to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).

### **Will Electric Vehicles Have Their Year in 2018?**

*By Sarah Reed*

Alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) became mainstays in the news in 2017, with several big stories focusing predominantly on electric vehicles (EVs). This, combined with several other factors, could mean a big year in 2018 for EVs and a real shift towards an electric, autonomous, and connected vehicle future.

### **The National Association of Regional Councils' 2017 Wrap-Up**

*By NARC Staff*

Highlighting the innovative initiatives that regional councils are carrying out today and exploring where they can be leaders in their communities drove many of NARC's activities in 2017.

## **MEMBER REQUESTS**

### **Public Health: Addressing the Public Health Needs of Your Region**

Help NARC learn more about your efforts to create healthy communities. Is your regional council involved in addressing the public health needs of your region and its cities and towns? Are you looking at public health and the built environment? Some examples from your region may include: looking at ways to reduce the number of traffic deaths, creating accident-free bike lanes, ensuring access to affordable and appropriate housing, and improving your community's water and air quality, to name just a few. If your regional council is addressing these or other public

health needs within your region, please send the name of your project, a brief description, funding sources, and contact details to Neil Bomberg ([neil@narc.org](mailto:neil@narc.org)).

### **Transportation System Resiliency**

NARC has been asked to participate in a roundtable discussion focused on “Resiliency, Reliability, and Energy Infrastructure Planning.” Help NARC share your stories. How are you upgrading and preparing infrastructure (i.e. repairing/building more resilient roads, preparing for transportation fuel shortages, investing in alternative fuels, etc.)? What policies and programs are you implementing to support robust infrastructure investment, planning, and response (i.e. upgrading emergency plans, etc.)? Please send all relevant stories to Leslie Wollack ([leslie@narc.org](mailto:leslie@narc.org)) by February 2.

## **FEATURED JOBS**

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

### **Principal Planner – Manager of Project Programming**

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

### **Transportation Section Manager**

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, Albany, OR

### **Community and Economic Development Director**

Wasatch Front Regional Council, Salt Lake City, UT

### **Executive Director**

Indiana Association of Regional Councils, Indianapolis, IN

## **FUNDING**

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

### **Save America's Treasures - Preservation (Construction) Projects**

Applications Due: February 21

Save America's Treasures grants from the Historic Preservation Fund provide preservation and/or conservation assistance to nationally significant historic properties and collections. Grants are awarded through a competitive process and require a dollar-for-dollar, non-federal match, which can be cash or documented in-kind. The grants are administered by the National Park Service (NPS) in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

### **Pool Safely Grant Program**

Applications Due: April 2

In accordance with the *Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act*, the Consumer Product Safety Commission is accepting applications for the Pool Safely Grant Program (PSGP). This program provides state and local governments with assistance to help implement enforcement and education programs, with the goal of preventing drownings and drain entrapment in pools and spas. Last year's grantees were the City of Bridgeport, CT (\$74,973.00); District of Columbia Department of Health (\$170,250.00); Florida Department of Health, Broward County (\$250,000.00); Florida Department of Health, Lake County (\$155,061.00); and City of Stamford, CT (\$131,252.00).

## **EVENTS**

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

### **Civic Capacity: Building the Foundation for Revitalization**

January 25, 2:00 PM ET

Legacy city revitalization is no small task; it requires a shared vision, calculated risk-taking, and the ability to carry out a plan. The Greater Ohio Policy Center has identified robust, collaborative, and effective civic capacity as a standout strategy that has consistently proven essential in helping communities of all sizes, but especially smaller legacy cities, stabilize and thrive. Communities with the ability to identify and confront challenges can more successfully carry out other proven

strategies for community revitalization. In conjunction with J.P. Morgan Chase, Greater Ohio Policy Center is hosting a webinar to share concrete steps stakeholders can take to strengthen local civic capacity and leverage it for impact in their community. The webinar will bring together experts in local government, finance, and community development to share strategies for success.

### **Technology Forecast 2018: What State and Local Government Technology Officials Can Expect**

January 25, 2:00 PM ET

For this popular annual event, the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) and Public Technology Institute (PTI) come together to provide a picture of what the technology priorities, issues, and trends will be for state and local governments in 2018. This year, they are pleased to add the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) Standing Panel on Technology Leadership as a program sponsor.

### **One Water for America Policy Framework Webinar 2: Accelerate Agriculture-Utility Partnerships to Improve Water Quality**

January 31, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

When it comes to improving water quality and conservation, one topic drives more interest and engagement than almost anything else: building partnerships between water providers and the agricultural sector. Agriculture is a crucial keystone of our society, but also one of the greatest contributors to water pollution. Agriculture and land management present the best opportunities to protect water quality, preserve ecosystems, and safeguard our drinking water supplies. By developing and implementing best practices that balance conservation with productivity, we can greatly improve the quality of our surface and groundwater resources. This webinar is part two of a seven-part series diving into each of the Seven Big Ideas in the *One Water for America Policy Framework*.

### **Partnering with Military Installations**

Feb 1, 12:00-1:30 PM ET

Across the country, NLC members have military bases stationed in their communities. Like a city, a military installation oversees its own police department, justice system, parks and recreation services, and the base commander is the mayor. As a relatively independent and self-governing community, how are local leaders across the nation partnering with nearby military personnel to foster economic and social growth in the city? NLC members with military communities are forging creative partnerships to deal with common challenges, such as: fluctuating population size and demographics, workforce stability and development, revitalizing surplus property to expand residential and commercial options, and offering support services to military personnel and their families.

### **AllTransit™ 2.0 Webinar: Discover the Social and Economic Benefits of Transit**

February 2, 2:00 PM ET

CNT's **AllTransit** tool has been updated with new data, innovative features, and a smoother user experience. The database includes 824 transit agencies and more than 13,000 routes. You can now compare two geographies to get a side-by-side complete look at the metrics. Users can download a printable fact sheet with easy-to-use infographics on topics such as equity and access, to readily take to meetings and include in presentations. The transit gap finder identifies areas where there is a demand for transit but the service is not as good as it could be, compared to a nation-wide scale. Learn more about this tool from Chief Research Scientist Peter Haas and Acting Executive Director and Managing Director, Urban Analytics Linda Young. For more information, contact Research and Urban Planning Analyst Preeti Shankar at [pshankar@cnt.org](mailto:pshankar@cnt.org). AllTransit 2.0 was made possible with funding from **TransitCenter**.

## **CONTACT US**

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