



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



For Your Radar! NARC is scheduling a conference with the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) on February 22nd for members to talk about EDA programs in the following states: CO, UT, WY, MT, ND, SD, IA, KS, NE, and MO. Stay tuned for more details.

EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear Colleagues,

Coming to DC for the National Conference of Regions next week? We look forward to welcoming you to NARC's new home at 660 North Capitol Street NW, down the hall from the National League of Cities and National Association of Counties. We will host the conference Sunday evening reception right here in our new offices at 6:00 PM, just blocks from the conference hotel. The latest update of the conference agenda can be found [HERE](#).

If you would like to help plan the program for the summer meeting, drop us a note to join the planning committee. Make sure to join us for the Capitol Hill breakfast on Wednesday morning in the Capitol Visitors' Center to hear from lawmakers on what to expect from the 115th Congress. Directions will be available at the hotel for both the Sunday evening reception and Wednesday breakfast.

There is a lot of activity in Washington and we are anxious to share with you our outlook on what to expect from Congress and the Administration. Possible budget cuts to local programs such as transit and housing, the local impacts of tax reform, mandates and preemption of state and local authority, and rollbacks of regulations all have potential implications for your communities and could be on the agenda for lawmakers. We hope you can join us and help us bring the regional perspective to Capitol Hill and the new Administration.

Best,
Leslie Wollack, NARC Executive Director

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Overview

The Trump Administration continues to fill out its Cabinet with the confirmation of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao last Tuesday. Democrats have slowed the confirmation process for other nominees including Treasury Secretary-designate Steven Mnuchin and Health and Human Services Secretary-designate Tom Price, although Senators were able to vote the nominees out of committee and to the Senate floor. Other nominees continue to move toward confirmation, including Betsy DeVos for education secretary, Rick Perry for energy secretary, and Ryan Zinke for interior secretary. Former Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson was formally sworn in as secretary of State Wednesday. Not a single Democrat in two Senate committees voted to support Rep. Mick Mulvaney's (R-SC) nomination for director of the Office of Management and Budget on Thursday. While his confirmation by the full Senate appears assured in coming weeks, he will likely lack the bipartisan support often needed to push major spending plans through Congress.

Washington is preparing for the biggest nomination fight to come with President Trump's Supreme Court justice nominee. Federal Judge Neil Gorsuch will need 60 votes to clear a procedural hurdle needed for confirmation. That threshold was removed for lower court nominees and cabinet positions in 2013. With partisan tensions high and a Supreme Court nomination fight about to begin, look for early signs of a breakdown in the appropriations process.

Appropriations Outlook

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) told reporters last week that this year's packed legislative schedule will prevent completion of all twelve spending bills through regular order. Returning to regular order has been a priority for McConnell, who also failed last year to pass all regular spending bills before the end of the fiscal year on October 1. This announcement was no surprise, however, given the lengthy process of confirming cabinet members, a Supreme Court nomination, and a resolution to the current year spending bills. The current continuing resolution expires on April 28.

President Trump is expected to address a joint session of Congress on February 28. Outlines of a fiscal year 2018 spending plan may be included in the discussion. Office of Management and Budget Director Designee Mulvaney has said he hopes to provide a "skinny" budget to Congress in February and a "more detailed budget" in April or early May. A delay in confirmation could interfere with the timetable.

Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America

Last week, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held their first full committee hearing of the 115th Congress titled *Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America*. The committee heard from leaders of FedEx Corporation, Cargill, Inc., BMW of North America, and Vermeer Corporation, as well as the president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). The witnesses offered ideas about how to pay for an infrastructure package and what types of projects should be included. Several talked about the need for air traffic control reform and spoke in favor of user fees and increasing the gas tax. The panelists were also asked by Michael Capuano (D-MA) about public/private partnerships, a cornerstone of Trump's original plan, to which they all agreed cannot alone solve our infrastructure needs. In Chairman Bill Shuster's (R-PA) opening statement he talked about the focus on infrastructure in this election and the mention of it during the president's inaugural address, but did not offer any details on their infrastructure plans.

NACo is Urging House Members to Sign Municipal Bond Dear Colleague Letter

U.S. Reps. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD) and Randy Hultgren (R-IL) are circulating a bipartisan "Dear Colleague" **letter** to protect tax-exempt municipal bonds in any future tax reform or infrastructure measures. The letter will be sent to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Ranking Member Richard Neal (D-MA). Current cosigners include: Reps. Hultgren, Ruppersberger, Napolitano (D-CA), Messer (R-IN), Brooks (R-AL) and Capuano (D-MA). Visit **NACo's County Explorer** to download your state municipal bond profile and share

this with your members of Congress and their staff. Republican members should have their staff contact David Heitlinger in Rep. Hultgren's office at David.Heitlinger@mail.house.gov, and House Democrats should have staff contact Bill Hulse in Rep. Ruppertsberger's office at Bill.Hulse@mail.house.gov. Municipal finance and the threat to the tax exemption for municipal bonds will be on the agenda in Washington, DC. Don't miss this important session.

OTHER NEWS

Report: Investment Strategies for Solar, Battery Storage, and Clean Energy Equity

How to make renewable energy technologies like solar PV and battery storage more accessible to low-income communities is detailed in a report by The Kresge Foundation and prepared by the nonprofit **Clean Energy Group**. The report contains a comprehensive set of recommendations for foundation investment strategies that could bend the arc of the solar+storage market to benefit disadvantaged communities, in both urban and rural areas of the country.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

SANDAG Region Chosen as Autonomous Vehicle Proving Ground

USDOT designated the San Diego region as one of their ten proving grounds for autonomous vehicles. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Caltrans, and the City of Chula Vista jointly submitted the **application** with support from several auto manufactures and technology companies. SANDAG's region is the only proving ground to incorporate a state/regional/local/private partnership. USDOT designated proving grounds will offer opportunities for sharing information and developing best practices concerning the safe deployment of autonomous vehicles.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Director, Sustainable Solutions and Transportation Alternatives

Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Dayton, OH

Alamo Local Authority (ALA) Program Analyst

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Executive Director

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Colorado Springs, CO

Executive Director

Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Spokane, WA

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Solar Equipment, Installation, and Licensing & Certification: A Guide for States and Municipalities

February 9, 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET

CESA produced a guide on standards and requirements for solar equipment, installation, and licensing and certification. The guide, ***Standards and Requirements for Solar Equipment, Installation, and Licensing and Certification: A Guide for States and Municipalities***, is designed for state and municipal officials who are developing or revising solar standards and requirements. It discusses a selection of programs and rules for solar equipment, installation, and licensing & certification to highlight the means by which states and municipalities have addressed these areas and includes recommendations and considerations for each topic area. Tune into this webinar to learn about the guide from the authors.

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.

BroadbandUSA: Leveraging National Data to Jumpstart Your Broadband Plan

February 15, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

The U.S. Census Bureau, NTIA and FCC collect and make data about availability, subscriptions and usage publicly available. Join us to do a "deep dive" into federal datasets, including the FCC Form 477 filings from broadband providers that show broadband availability, speed and technology, and NTIA's Digital Nation data, which represents the largest comprehensive national household survey on computer and Internet use. We'll also highlight how the BroadbandUSA Connectivity Initiative will leverage this data as part of its online assessment tool. Hear from the experts and ask your questions.

BroadbandUSA: Connectivity Initiative (CI) Update

March 9, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

The Community Connectivity Initiative webinar series will resume on March 9th. Participate in this discussion about the BroadbandUSA Connectivity Initiative -- a local planning tool that promotes broadband planning, action and progress.

Save the date! 51st Annual Conference & Exhibition

June 4-7 - Monterey, CA

Join NARC and the California Association of Councils of Governments for NARC's 51st Annual Conference and Exhibition, which focuses on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education.

CONTACT US

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