



## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

### **Nomination Hearings**

This week all eyes in Washington will be focused on the Senate, where Democrats and Republicans appear poised for a high-profile fight over Neil Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told *Fox News Sunday* that Gorsuch would be confirmed by Friday, even if it requires changing Senate rules to kill the filibuster for Supreme Court nominees. If 41 Democrats block consideration of Gorsuch's nomination, the Republican-led Senate could alter the rules to allow a simple majority vote to limit debate on Supreme Court nominees -- triggering the "nuclear option." Also on today's Judiciary Committee markup agenda are nominees for two top U.S. Department of Justice posts: Rod Rosenstein for deputy attorney general and Rachel Brand for associate attorney general.

Today, the Senate will begin consideration for nominee Elaine Duke to be deputy secretary of homeland security, with a confirmation vote planned for tomorrow. Wall Street lawyer Jay Clayton, Trump's nominee to head the Securities and Exchange Commission, is scheduled for a committee vote tomorrow. Scott Gottlieb, nominated to head the Food and Drug Administration, has his committee hearing on Wednesday.

### **Appropriations**

House and Senate appropriators continue to try to reach an agreement on a stopgap spending measure to avert a government shutdown after the current continuing resolution (CR) expires on April 28. The plan is to file legislation after lawmakers return from recess on April 24.

Still unknown is whether appropriators can agree on an omnibus spending bill or have to resort to extending the CR through the of fiscal year 2017 (September 30). Military services have been warning Congress that another stopgap measure would force the Navy to cancel ship deployments

and shut down air wings. They'll have a chance to reinforce that argument Wednesday when the four service chiefs plan to testify at a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee.

Lawmakers are weighing in on several NARC priority programs, including a **“Dear Colleague” letter in support of the Community Development Block Grant** and continued funding for the **Land and Water Conservation Fund**.

House and Senate authorizing committees will begin the process of developing a major infrastructure package with hearings on transportation programs. The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee will hold a hearing on implementation of the FAST Act with Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed and witnesses from the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Witnesses will be asked about the use of public private partnerships for funding transportation.

Last week, the House T&I Committee held a hearing on reauthorization of federal brownfields legislation with local government witnesses. Tomorrow, the House Energy and Commerce Committee will hold their own hearing on the program. NARC will be submitting testimony for the record in support of the program and its benefit to regional economic development.

### **USDOT 50th Anniversary Open House**

Last week at USDOT Headquarters in Washington, D.C., Secretary Elaine Chao addressed a group of guests and employees in celebration of the department's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She stated that the \$1 trillion infrastructure plan could include energy, water, broadband, and veterans hospitals, and stressed that private capital would be just one of the funding sources for the bill. Secretary Chao also emphasized safety, technology, and the potential for public private partnerships. NARC Executive Director Leslie Wollack and NARC Director of Transportation Programs Erich Zimmermann both attended the event to welcome the new secretary.

### **WOTUS Litigation Following the Executive Order**

President Trump's executive order, ***Restoring the Rule of Law, Federalism, and Economic Growth by Reviewing the 'Waters of the United States' Rule***, calls for “rescinding or revising” the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) definitional **rule** published in the summer of 2015. Many state and local governments **objected** to the broad nature of these regulations, in particular to the expansive definition of ditches and the ambiguous definition of tributaries. The executive order acknowledges that rewriting the WOTUS definitional regulations will require going through the lengthy and complicated process that the 2015 final regulations went through. This process involves proposing a new rule, receiving and responding to (likely thousands) of comments, and issuing a final rule.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **2017 NARC Elections in Monterey**

Elections for NARC Officers, Board of Directors, and Executive Directors Council (EDC) positions will take place at the upcoming annual meeting. NARC is your organization and we want you to participate in serving and electing 2017-2018 leadership! Both the Board and EDC will meet during the 51st Annual Conference & Exhibition, and these meetings are open to attending members. Members in good standing are eligible to serve, make nominations, and elect NARC Board leadership. Information on open seats will be available soon. Send questions and nominations to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).

- **Board Elections:** *Wednesday, June 7 at 9:00 AM*
- **EDC Elections:** *Monday, June 5 at 4:30 PM*

## **REGION SPOTLIGHT**

### **MAPC on Greater Boston Population Growth**

Last week, the *Boston Globe* interviewed Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Executive Director Marc Draisen on the slowing growth of the Boston region. Five large counties in Eastern Massachusetts added about 25,000 people in 2016, according to the Census Bureau, a number that fell for three consecutive years and is down by nearly half since 2013. Draisen said that housing costs are deterring young families and workers from the area and emphasized the importance of

housing production. The area has plenty of apartments and condos but having more houses for sale in the inner suburbs would help keep millennials in the area. Boston also relies on immigrants for population growth and this president could have “a huge impact on [Boston's] economy” if immigration is curtailed, according to Draisen.

### **TBRPC Workshop Helps Cities and Counties Comply with Florida's *Peril of Flood Act***

On March 3, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) held its first Peril of Flood workshop. TBRPC Principal Planner Brady Smith spoke about *2015 Peril of Flood Act* requirements for local governments and Shawn College of the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission presented an overview of the City of Tampa's sea level rise vulnerability assessment to support Tampa's recently proposed Peril of Flood comprehensive plan amendment. Participants also engaged in a facilitated discussion on how flood mitigation and adaptation strategies can be incorporated into comprehensive planning goals, objectives, and policies. This event was the first of four TBRPC Peril of Flood workshops being held in March/April 2017.

## **MEMBER REQUEST**

### **NARC Request: Brownfields Success Stories**

Has your region benefited from the U.S. Environment Protection Agency Brownfields grant program? NARC has been asked to submit a statement to the record by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee ahead of their hearing on reauthorizing the Brownfields program. We are hoping to include success stories and best practices from members to highlight the importance of this program. Please contact Sarah Reed, [sarah@narc.org](mailto:sarah@narc.org), with any information or questions.

## **FEATURED JOBS**

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

### **Business Analyst**

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

### **JLUS GIS Specialist**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Bexar Aging Case Worker for Veterans Services**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Executive Director**

Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, Savannah, GA

## **FUNDING**

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

## **EVENTS**

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

### **Federal Reserve Connecting Communities Webinar**

April 13, 3:00 PM ET

Much has been said about the skills gap that exists in the U.S. economy today. New research from the Federal Reserve Banks of Philadelphia and Atlanta finds that the level of education requested to fill similar jobs across metro areas in the U.S. varies substantially. The status quo is counterproductive for both workers and employers. Are there solutions that connect talented workers with decent-paying jobs based on their demonstrated skills and competencies rather than their degree? Tune in to this Connecting Communities webinar to hear from leading experts within the Federal Reserve and across the field as they engage in a dialogue about recent research and current initiatives to close the skills gap. Participation is free, but pre-registration is required.

### **Legal Issues Surrounding the Executive Order on Sanctuary Jurisdictions Webinar**

April 18, 1:00 PM ET

President Trump's January 25 Executive Order on "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States," and specifically its provisions related to "sanctuary jurisdictions," have been subject to litigation. This webinar will help local government officials understand, and learn how to explain, the legal issues at stake in this litigation. Speakers: Lisa Soronen, State and Local Legal Center; Amanda Kellar, International Municipal Lawyers Association; and Hadi Sedigh, National Association of Counties.

### **NARC Webinar! Tapping into the Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities Program**

April 20, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

Are you facing challenges related to brownfields? Would you be interested in learning how you can receive free assistance from brownfield experts? Through funds provided by EPA, the Technical Assistance to Brownfield (TAB) communities program **provides free assistance** to local, county, regional, state, and tribal governments, as well as not-for-profit entities. The TAB program provides a range of assistance, including: guidance on developing grant proposals, prioritizing brownfield sites, interpreting site characterization results, explaining clean-up technologies, navigating regulatory programs and requirements, layering funding and financing options, engaging the community stakeholders, and much more. Join NARC and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) to learn how your community can access this benefit. The webinar will provide examples of how NJIT has assisted hundreds of communities, and will give you information on how you can tap into the TAB program.

### **Details Available! 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.

## **CONTACT US**

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