



## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

### Farm Bill Released

House Agriculture Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway introduced the ***Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018***, also known as this year's Farm Bill. The committee proposed many new additions to the bill, including:

- Providing the Agriculture Secretary the authority to prioritize projects that help communities meet rural health crises;
- Authorizing substantial annual appropriations for rural broadband;
- Creating a grant program for borrowers financing rural broadband projects that provide retail service;
- Strengthening regional economic development initiatives; and
- Over 35 changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), most notably to the program's existing work requirements.

Check out the committee's **section-by-section summary** of the bill, **policy highlights**, and **other Farm Bill resources**. The bill is expected to be marked up in committee on Wednesday.

### Long-Term FAA Reauthorization Bill Introduced in House

Last Friday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee introduced the ***Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2018***. Committee Chairman Bill Shuster said, "This bill provides many important reforms that will help U.S. manufacturers and job creators lead in a very competitive global marketplace... [and] ensures long-term investment and stability in aviation infrastructure for America's large, small, and rural communities."

Ranking Member Peter DeFazio stated, "I'm glad we finally had the opportunity to come together and introduce a bipartisan, long-term FAA reauthorization bill – a bill that gives the FAA long-

term funding it needs to do its job and includes mandates to improve aviation safety, to continue leading the world in aviation research and innovation, and to make needed and targeted reforms to critical aviation programs.” The current deadline for reauthorization is September 30, 2018.

### **President Trump Issues Executive Order on Welfare Reform**

On April 10, President Trump issued an executive order instructing the Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Treasury Departments to review and institute recommended public assistance program changes. “Since its inception, the welfare system has grown into a large bureaucracy that might be susceptible to measuring success by how many people are enrolled in a program rather than by how many have moved from poverty into financial independence,” the executive order reads. The order includes *Principles of Economic Mobility*, which aim to prioritize benefits for the truly needy, streamline wasteful and duplicative programs, and enhance work requirements.

### **EPA Awards \$25.4 Million to Train and Assist Small Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced more than \$25 million in grants to provide small public drinking water and wastewater systems with the training and technical assistance to achieve and maintain compliance with the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, improve operational performance, and help inform private drinking water well owners about protecting their drinking water supply and improving water quality. The training and assistance will also help system operators identify when critical infrastructure upgrades are needed and how EPA can help support those efforts. The national grantees are the National Rural Water Association, Rural Community Assistance Partnership, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

### **EPA Names Top Cities for ENERGY STAR Certified buildings in 2017**

The EPA has announced its “Top Cities” list, ranking the 25 metropolitan areas with the most ENERGY STAR Certified buildings in the 2017 calendar year. Los Angeles took the top spot this year with more than 700 ENERGY STAR certified buildings. Rounding out the top five were Washington, DC; Dallas, TX; Atlanta, GA; and New York, NY. By the end of 2017, more than 32,000 buildings across the country have earned this certification, saving a collective total of more than \$4.5 billion on energy bills and the equivalent of the annual electricity use of more than 3 million American homes.

### **Supreme Court Considers Whether States Should Have Power to Tax All Online Sales**

This week, the U.S. Supreme Court will listen to arguments regarding sales taxes on Internet purchases. The Supreme Court previously ruled in favor of limiting state sales tax collection power to individuals and businesses that have a “physical presence” in the state, but the boom of the online marketplace has increasingly complicated this rule. State and local governments lose billions of dollars in tax revenue from online retailers. The Supreme Court Justices will consider *South Dakota v. Wayfair* tomorrow morning.

## **REGION SPOTLIGHT**

### **MAPC Selects LimeBike, Spin for 15-Community Regional Bike Share System**

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) recently incorporated a dockless bike share system in their region. MAPC selected Limebike and Spin as the two vendors that would provide users the ability to pick up and drop off a bike virtually anywhere in their fifteen participating communities. MAPC Executive Director Marc Draisen said, “The new system will incorporate station-less, smart bike technology, and will also feature some pedal-assist electric bicycles, or ‘e-bikes,’ to make cycling uphill and into headwinds less challenging. And, the system will be launched at no cost to the participating cities and towns.”

### **In Houston, a Focus on Innovation to 'Build Back Better'**

Houston has always had an eye for new technology and innovation. In the wake of Hurricane Harvey; however, local officials learned just how helpful these tools can be during a storm and after when it is time to rebuild. Jesse Bounds, director of innovation for the City of Houston, relayed several examples of the ways Houston residents used technology during and after the storm, including:

- The local tech community of civic hackers developed ad-hoc technologies to address citizens' immediate needs;
- Volunteers used crowdsourcing tools to rescue 7,000 households;
- Houston-area public agencies used open-sourced platforms and social media websites like Nextdoor to share critical emergency communications; and
- Houston leaders are currently partnering with **The Atlas Marketplace** to learn how other cities are building back even better after a natural disaster.

## MEMBERSHIP REQUEST

### MORPC Request: Costar Subscription

Does your organization subscribe to Costar? The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is looking for feedback from those that are using Costar to access regional data. If you have used or are currently using Costar, MORPC would like to know about your experience, the quality of the data, and if you found their pricing structure consistent. Please share your thoughts with [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).

## 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).

### 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Bill Bolsters Many State and Local Programs

By NARC Staff

Since the release of the FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill on March 21, NARC staff has been combing through the \$1.3 trillion package to determine how localities will be impacted. Much of it is great news for regions, as the bill proposes additional funding for so many of the priorities NARC has advocated for over the last year.

### President Releases Budget that Would Undercut Funding to Regions

by Neil Bomberg

On February 12, the president officially submitted his **fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget proposal** and **addendum** to Congress. If enacted, his recommendations would make significant programmatic and funding changes to federal programs in FY 2019. The result of these recommendations would include a noteworthy \$107 billion parity gap between defense and non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding levels.

## FEATURED JOBS

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

### Analyst I (Management Services)

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento, CA

### Local Government Services Intern

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento, CA

### Project Analyst

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento, CA

## FUNDING

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

### USDA Technology Grants to Expand Access to Health Care and Education in Rural Areas

Applications Due: June 4

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications for grants to use broadband e-Connectivity to improve access to healthcare and educational services in rural communities. Grants will range from \$50,000 to \$500,000 under the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) program. Grants can finance projects that provide job training academic instruction, or access to specialized medical care. Proposals for projects whose primary purpose is to provide

opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery will receive 10 priority points when applications are scored. Also, USDA will provide priority points for grants that offer access to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) courses.

### **Choice Neighborhoods FY 2018 Planning Grants**

Applications Due: June 12

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is making up to \$5,000,000 available for Planning Grants, including Planning and Action Grants. Planning Grants are two-year grants that assist communities with severely distressed public or HUD-assisted housing in developing a successful neighborhood transformation plan and building the support necessary for that plan to be successfully implemented. Planning and Action Grants are three and a half year planning grants that pair planning with action. This program is focused on three core goals:

1. **Housing:** Replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood;
2. **People:** Improve outcomes of households living in the target housing related to employment and income, health, and children's education; and
3. **Neighborhood:** Create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community.

## **EVENTS**

***View full list of events!***

### **NARC Webinar! F4F: Incorporating Electric Vehicles into Your Fleet**

April 18, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Fleets for the Future (F4F) is a national U.S. Department of Energy-funded partnership, led by NARC, Clean Cities coalitions, and industry experts tasked with coordinating regional and national procurement initiatives to consolidate bulk orders of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) and infrastructure. Please join the F4F team on April 18 to learn about electric vehicle (EV) opportunities available on the market today, how to assess the suitability in your fleets, and how incorporating EVs can reduce costs for your fleets. You can find the team's best practice guide for electric vehicle procurement on the **F4F website**. Q&A will follow the presentation.

### **Local Health Policy 101: Understanding Ordinances, Resolutions, and Proclamations**

April 19, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

Attend this webinar, co-sponsored by the Network for Public Health Law and the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH), to learn about public health legal and policy innovations in small-town and medium-sized communities, as well as in the nation's largest cities, to address issues such as child poverty, tobacco control, environmental health, and mental health.

### **The Future is Now: Artificial Intelligence and Robotics and What it Means for Local Government**

April 19, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Robotics is commonplace in the manufacturing industry with some experts predicting that robots will take 50 percent of jobs by the year 2050. Add to this the many uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence (think Siri, Alexa, monitoring devices). This webinar will look at the fast-growing landscape of robotics and AI and how these technologies may impact the local government workforce and the services we deliver. Will a robot be greeting your constituents at City Hall in the coming years?

### **How Benefit Cuts Impact People with Disabilities; How to Fight Back**

April 19, 3:00-4:00 PM ET

Learn about likely federal policy threats affecting people with disabilities in programs such as Medicaid, nutrition assistance, SSI/SSDI, housing, and legal protections. There will also be a discussion of effective messaging to combat these threats and actionable steps you can take to get involved. Following the presentations, participants will have an opportunity to ask questions.

## **NARC Webinar! Regional Food Planning Initiatives Help Shape Healthy Communities and Economies**

April 26, 3:00-4:00 PM ET

Regional councils have a natural advantage for leading food planning initiatives. Join this webinar to learn about this advantage, the number of regional councils already taking on food-related initiatives, and the kinds of projects they are implementing. Our speakers will highlight opportunities and common challenges for regional councils in the local food space. Three regional councils will share information about their projects and how their efforts will help their organizations' economic and community development and food equity goals.

### **CONTACT US**

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