



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Senate is in session. House will resume session on May 12.

FY 2016 Budget Conference Agreement

The Senate is set to consider the FY 2016 budget resolution conference report to serve as a blueprint for the 13 individual spending bills as early as Tuesday. The conference agreement calls for a balanced budget by FY 2024, with savings taken from budget reductions. The budget blueprint would cut \$5.3 trillion in spending over the next 10 years by repealing the 2010 health care law, reducing spending on Medicare and Medicaid, changing programs such as food stamps, and more. It proposes \$4.2 trillion in reductions to mandatory programs over 10 years, calls for a deficit-neutral overhaul of the tax code that lowers rates, and assumes \$124 billion in additional savings through "dynamic scoring." It includes instructions to House and Senate committees with oversight over the health care law to trigger the budget reconciliation process (which only requires a majority rather than super-majority vote) to repeal the law. Spending caps on FY 2016 discretionary spending would remain in place, but the agreement would make more funds available for defense only in the future. The proposal assumes an extra \$245 billion for defense over 10 years while cutting non-defense spending below sequester-reduced levels. Democrats oppose the budget because of its cuts to domestic spending, its repeal of the healthcare overhaul, and proposed tax cuts. They have threatened to vote against any appropriations bills that reduces spending according to the budget's caps.

Energy and Water Development Appropriations

The *Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (HR 2028)* passed by a vote of 240-177 in the House last week. Passage of the bill, as amended, would provide \$36.1 billion in programmatic funding for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) Bureau of Reclamation, and several regional water and power authorities for FY 2016. The bill would prohibit the US Army Corps of Engineers from going forward with the *Waters of the United States (WOTUS)* rule-making to expand the bodies of water that are subject to regulation under the *Clean Water Act*. The bill also provides \$5.6 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers and \$1.1 billion for DOI's Bureau of Reclamation. Nearly all Democrats voted against the bill which would lock in reduced spending levels based on sequester limits.

Last week, Senators John Barrasso (R-WY) and Joe Donnelly (D-IN) introduced the *Federal Water Quality Protection Act (S. 1140)*, a bipartisan bill that would require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and USACE to restart the WOTUS rule-making process. NARC joined with the National Association of Counties, U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities in a **letter supporting S 1140**. The groups sent a similar **letter to House leaders** urging them to support S 1140.

OTHER NEWS

The 50 States of Solar

The North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center recently released a new installment of ***The 50 States of Solar: A Quarterly Look at America's Fast-Evolving Distributed Solar Policy Conversation***. This report is the most comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the rapidly evolving state policy landscape for distributed solar.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Elected Officials Talk Trash For Litter Prevention

Don't Trash Arizona is a litter prevention program conducted by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Arizona Department of Transportation to address the environmental, economic, health, and safety impacts of roadway litter. The partnership with Whataburger, a 700-restaurant chain with locations across the country, coincides with Earth Month, preceded Earth Day by one day, and marked the launch of a new "trash talk" campaign for the anti-litter initiative. "We already know that some of the most-commonly littered items are cups and wrappers, many of which originate from fast food establishments," said MAG Chair Michael LeVault, mayor of Youngtown. "This partnership allows *Don't Trash Arizona* to deliver its litter prevention message in a direct and memorable way. It's not every day that a mayor hands you your cheeseburger."

Brownfield Redevelopment Forum

The West Florida Regional Planning Council (WFRPC) in Pensacola, Florida is co-hosting the *Third Annual Northwest Florida Brownfield Redevelopment Forum* to help attendees learn how to redevelop contaminated sites. The event features an overview of brownfields assessment and cleanup, local success stories, updates to Florida laws governing brownfield sites, economic incentives, and a grant writing workshop. This year's event features breakout sessions for local government projects, technical site cleanup, and private sector redevelopment.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Transportation Engineer/Planner

Belomar Regional Council, Wheeling, WV

Associate Planner, Department of Planning and Environment

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH

Travel Demand Modeler/Transportation Planner

Fresno Council of Governments, Fresno, CA

Director of Transportation

East Texas Council of Governments, Kilgore, TX

Planner/Research Analyst

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

Director of Planning Services

Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, NV

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

\$3 Million in Short-term Planning Assistance Available to Coal-Impacted Communities

Application Deadline: Rolling

Last week, the Economic Development Administration announced the availability of \$3 million in planning assistance to communities impacted by contractions in the coal economy. These funds are made available as part of the Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic

Revitalization (POWER) Initiative.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Water Utility Planning Strategies to Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change

May 5, 2015, 1:00 PM ET

This National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration webinar will focus on the impact of climate change on water resources. The impact has been noted in several national studies as one of the critical issues for public utility planning, especially related to water supply systems. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and the Water Research Foundation have been investigating water management strategies to mitigate these impacts. This presentation will share a suite of adaptive management strategies and solutions geared toward evaluating the impacts of climate change on water supplies in the Midwest.

Getting More Green for Your Stormwater Infrastructure

May 5, 1:00 - 2:30 PM ET

As part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Infrastructure Program, this webcast will showcase different ways of measuring both cost savings and benefits related to green infrastructure practices. EPA staff and leading professional from the field will discuss new research and case studies detailing successful approaches to valuing green infrastructure.

NARC/Infrastructure Week Webinar! Innovative Approaches to Infrastructure Funding

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

Infrastructure investment is critical to place-based economic success. However, in the wake of the economic downturn, many transportation and infrastructure projects have been neglected, leaving our roads, bridges, and transit systems in dire need of attention. The pending insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund has perpetuated this problem, putting more of the onus on local governments to find cash for these projects in already difficult times. With federal transportation funding in jeopardy, regions and localities are exploring new options to address their infrastructure challenges. The National Association of Regional Councils, Center for Transportation Excellence, and National League of Cities will host this webinar to highlight some innovative and replicable approaches that regional and city leaders have taken to fund infrastructure projects. Speakers will explore ballot measure successes, user fee models, and VMT pilots, among other approaches, and share best practices and lessons learned.

NARC's 49th Annual Conference and Exhibition

June 7-10, Raleigh, NC

Join the conversation on the latest in regional government at NARC's Annual Conference and Exhibition, hosted by the Triangle J Council of Governments. Events begin Sunday afternoon with two optional mobile workshops exploring Raleigh. Sessions will highlight innovations in transportation, digital technology, street design, the impact of changing demographics, economic development tools for regions, collaborating to reduce waste, economic transformation in the region, workforce, green infrastructure, and water resources.

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