

May 8, 2017 [View this email in your browser](#)



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



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NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The Senate is in session; the House is in recess and will return on Tuesday, May 16.

Funding the Federal Government

The president on Friday signed the omnibus spending bill that will fund the government through September 30th. The nearly \$1.2 trillion bipartisan measure comes after weeks of negotiations between Republicans, Democrats, and the White House. The deal puts an additional \$15 billion toward the president's planned military buildup and \$1.5 billion more for border security. However, the president's proposal to cut domestic programs by \$15 billion and provide funding for border wall construction was not included, and funding for domestic programs important to regional councils such as TIGER grants and CDBG were maintained at current levels despite the president's demand that they be cut by \$15 billion to pay for the increase in military spending.

The president's request for border wall funding, \$40 billion in new military spending authority, and \$40 billion in cuts to domestic programs are likely to become a point of contention between Democrats, Republicans, and the White House in September. Talk of a government shutdown in October is becoming commonplace and even the president has indicated that he favors a government shutdown if his demands for military and border wall funding, and domestic program cuts are not met.

Overturning Obama Regulations

This is the last week in which the Senate can vote to overturn Obama-era regulations by a simple majority. Future efforts will require a 60 vote minimum. Democrats are trying to prevent Republicans from overturning further regulations by dragging out the debate time on nominees

who are up for consideration this week. If Republicans are able to bring regulations to the floor for a vote, it is likely that they will consider a regulation that requires operators of oil and gas wells on federal land to reduce the escape of methane.

Health Care

Last week the House passed its version of a bill to repeal and replace the *Affordable Care Act*, commonly known as ObamaCare. The bill, which was passed largely along party lines, was sent to the Senate for review and consideration. According to Senate Republicans, the Senate version of the bill will take a significant amount of time since they will have to deal with unpopular items in the House bill like Medicaid reform, elimination of protections for individuals with pre-existing conditions, elimination of income-based subsidies, and large tax breaks for the wealthy.

In an effort to move forward, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) appointed a 13-member working group to draft language; however, they cannot begin work until the costs associated with the House bill have been “scored” by the Congressional Budget Office. The original version of this bill would deny access to healthcare for 24 million people that are currently covered. It remains to be seen if the new version of the House bill will project a similar outcome.

This Week in the Senate

The Senate has a very busy week scheduled, including a:

- Tuesday hearing by the Senate Environment and Public Works Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on the role of public and private sectors in water resources;
- Wednesday hearing by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Water and Power Subcommittee on **S. 677**, dealing with permits for new water storage projects;
- Wednesday confirmation hearings by the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee for Althea Coetzee to be deputy administrator for the Small Business Administration; and
- Thursday hearing by the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee **on the status of the housing** finance system after nine years of conservatorship.

OTHER NEWS

FEMA Issues Advisory on Response to Severe Weather in Mid-West

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Monday released an advisory statement informing individuals in the Mississippi River Valley of ongoing state and federal assessments of damage caused by severe weather, tornadoes, and flooding that is taking place, in some areas at record levels, to ensure that state and local needs are met. The announcement also urges residents with flood insurance to reach out to their insurance agents to determine if they are covered for the specific damage they are experiencing. **Download the FEMA App** to locate and get directions to open shelters and receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service.

2017 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards

Applications Due: May 30 by 11:59 PM ET

Send submissions to fema-icp-awards@fema.dhs.gov

The application period is now open for the 2017 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards. The awards highlight innovative local practices and achievements by honoring individuals, organizations, and jurisdictions that have made outstanding contributions toward strengthening their community to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate a disaster. To be considered for this year's awards, all submissions must feature program activities taking place between January 1, 2016, and May 30, 2017. FEMA and partners from the emergency management industry will review all entries and select the winners in each of the following categories:

- Outstanding Citizen Corps Council
- Community Preparedness Champions
- Awareness to Action
- Technological Innovation
- Outstanding Achievement in Youth Preparedness
- John. D. Solomon Whole Community Preparedness Award
- Outstanding Private Sector Initiatives
- Outstanding Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Initiatives

- Outstanding Citizen Corps Partner Program
- Prepareathon in Action

Combined Built Environment Features Help Communities Get Active

The U.S. Community Preventive Services Task Force issued a new recommendation to increase physical activity through built environment approaches that combine transportation system interventions with land use and environmental design. The Task Force recommendation is based on evidence from a systematic review of 90 studies, which show that physical activity increases among individuals in communities with new or improved projects or policies combining transportation (e.g. pedestrian or cycling paths) with land use and design components (e.g. mixed land uses or access to public parks). Below you will find two guides to help your communities get active:

- **The Community Preventive Services Task Force** is an independent, nonfederal, panel of public health and prevention experts whose members are appointed by the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Task Force provides information for a wide range of decision makers on programs, services, and other interventions aimed at improving population health.
- **The Guide to Community Preventive Services** is a collection of all the evidence-based findings and recommendations of the Task Force.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

10 Things You Can Do to Reduce Air Pollution

It's Ozone Action Season and both the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments and Southeast Michigan Council of Governments put out a few actions to help reduce air pollution in your community. These actions are easy to apply in your region too!

- Drive less or leave your car at home. Instead, take the bus, carpool, bike, walk, or telecommute. You'll reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, as well as save money.
- Refuel your car or fill gas cans in the morning or after 6 p.m. Avoid spilling gas or releasing vapors.
- Properly maintain your vehicle. Get a tune up and inflate tires to the correct pressure.
- Turn your car off. Park the car and walk into the building instead of using the drive thru.
- Conserve energy in your home to reduce energy needs: hang clothes outside to dry rather than operate a dryer. Reduce air conditioner use.
- Change your mowing habits. Mow the lawn less frequently or mow earlier in the morning or in the evening.
- Insulate and weather-strip your home.
- Run dishwasher and washing machines only when fully loaded.
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Apply paint with rollers and brushes instead of sprays to cut down on fumes.

REGIONS LEAD

Visit www.regionslead.org to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too.

At Long Last... A FY 2017 Omnibus Appropriations Bill

by Neil Bomberg

After weeks of negotiations that at times seemed as if they would breakdown, the House and Senate early Monday morning reached an agreement on an appropriations bill that would increase military spending by \$15 billion, maintain non-defense discretionary funding, and increase border security funding by \$1.5 billion, but would prohibit any border security funds from being used to build the proposed border wall. The compromise bill seems more in keeping with Obama-era priorities than Trump-era priorities.

President's Tax Plan Leaves Out Infrastructure

by Erich Zimmermann

As you have no doubt heard by now, the Trump administration released a tax reform "plan" that filled just one side of a single sheet of paper. Which is to say, the plan is light on details... Aside

from the elimination of some tax deductions, the only other offset mentioned is a one-time tax on overseas earnings, or repatriation. This is notable if you care about infrastructure. Repatriation funding has long been considered the primary way to pay for a significant infrastructure investment.

Want America to Be ‘Great’ Again? Pay For It

by Pat Jones, IBTTA

This article was originally published in the April 18 issue of *Time* magazine. Pat Jones is the CEO of the International Bridge, Tunnel, and Turnpike Association (IBTTA), an organization that represents tolling agencies from around the nation and world. His organization has been at the forefront of advocating for increased resources to maintain our roads, bridges and tunnels, and other infrastructure. This blog argues for a coherent, thoughtful transportation policy that provides the necessary funds to ensure that America’s roads and bridges, and other infrastructure, are properly maintained. Most recently, Mr. Jones was a general session speaker at NARC’s 2017 National Conference of Regions.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Data Analyst

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Transportation Planner

East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission/Calhoun Area MPO, Anniston, AL

Labor Compliance Analyst

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Director of Planning

Southern California Association of Governments, Los Angeles, CA

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

WIFIA Funding Update

On April 10, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) *Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act* (WIFIA) program closed its first selection round for credit assistance. EPA’s WIFIA program will provide \$1 billion in credit to finance over \$2 billion in water infrastructure investments. EPA received letters from entities seeking loans for the program from all over the country, demonstrating the high demand from businesses seeking to invest in the economy and local communities. WIFIA credit assistance can be used for a wide-range of projects, from drinking water treatment to seawater desalination and drought mitigation to water recycling. About a third of prospective borrowers indicated they plan to co-finance their projects with other funding tools available through EPA, the Drinking Water or the Clean Water State Revolving Funds. WIFIA works separately from, but in coordination with, the State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs to provide subsidized financing for large dollar-value projects. By combining the benefits of the WIFIA and SRF programs, more communities can benefit from innovative loans and financing. To learn more about the WIFIA program, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wifia>.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

WEBINAR: Equity and Resilience in American Cities

May 9, 1:00 - 3:00 PM ET

Join Route Fifty online as they sit down with mayors to discuss how cities make sure that land-use decisions not only keep the city progressing forward, but don’t leave existing citizens behind. During this digital event, three mayors will discuss how they are working with the Rose Center to tackle issues of revitalization, equity, and resiliency. Hear from Anchorage, Alaska Mayor Ethan Berkowitz; Grand Rapids, Michigan Mayor Rosalynn Bliss; and San Jose, California Mayor Sam

Liccardo to gain valuable insights that you can apply to ensure inclusive and comprehensive development in your community.

WEBINAR: Managing Trees During Drought Conditions

May 9, 2:00 PM ET

This presentation will outline the impacts of drought on trees and the multiple strategies needed to protect them. During periods of drought, the knee-jerk response in many communities is to remove all lawn areas in the name of water conservation. If trees in those landscapes had been dependent on lawn irrigation to survive, they will suffer. This webinar will focus on proper irrigation of trees, with and without surrounding turf areas, and how to manage irrigation of trees throughout their life cycle for good health. Also, tree selection for long-term urban forest resiliency will be discussed. SAF and ISA CEUS are available.

LIVE WEBCAST: How to Grow the Economy & Jobs with Biogas & Renewable Natural Gas

May 23, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

The American Biogas Council, Coalition for Renewable Natural Gas, and Environmental and Energy Study Institute invite you to a briefing about the untapped energy in domestic wastes. Waste streams – including manure, agricultural waste, waste water, food scraps, and landfill gases – can be converted to biogas and upgraded to renewable natural gas for electricity, pipeline injection, or vehicle use, while also providing valuable products such as fertilizer and compost. Using these products provides local jobs, improves air and water quality, assists in meeting multi-agency nutrient management strategies, and helps to meet multiple policy goals espoused in both the Farm Bill and the Renewable Fuel Standard.

NARC RFI! NARC Seeks Cooperative Procurement Partner for AFVs in the Private Sector

Submission Deadline: June 2

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to facilitate a process to gauge interest from trade associations or other agencies that have a national membership base or the capacity to reach a national target audience to create a cooperative procurement program that includes alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs). The target audience is private sector fleets or the commercial market. The **Fleets for the Future** (F4F) project, led by NARC, currently includes a national-scale public sector procurement initiative for AFVs along with fleet services, parts, and equipment.

Updated Agenda 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.

WEBINAR: Learn to Build a More Resilient Urban Forest

June 7 and June 8, 1:00 PM ET

Sustainable City Network will present an online training course for any personnel who are responsible for initiatives related to urban forestry, parks, and/or tree canopy management. This course will be presented in two 2-hour sessions held on consecutive days. The sessions will be recorded so registrants may attend live or via on-demand streaming video.

CONTACT US

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