

Email not displaying correctly? Click [HERE](#) to view it as a PDF.



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

VOL. XIV, No. 16, May 12, 2014

# eRegions

### **NARC**LEADERSHIP

President

Hon. Penny Gross

Supervisor,  
Fairfax County, VA

Chair Jim Hassinger,

Executive Directors Council

Executive Director,  
Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Commission

### **NARC**STAFF

**Joanna Turner**

Executive Director

**Shannon Baxevanis**

Deputy Director

**Mia Colson**

Program Analyst

**Nathan Devers**

Intern

**Marcy Fritter**

Office Manager

**Taylor Markwith**

Program Associate

**Lindsey Riley**

Deputy of Communications

PROGRAM UPDATE POLICY UPDATE  
GRANT OPPORTUNITIES UPCOMING EVENTS



## **EXECUTIVE**BRIEF

Colleagues,

It's a busy infrastructure week in Washington. In fact, it is **Infrastructure Week 2014**. With **agreement** on Water Resources legislation, the release and mark up of the Senate's surface transportation authorization, and calls for immediate highway trust fund **infusions** and **gas tax increase** votes, the next few months have a clear focus for NARC, our members and partners. As always, NARC will be a clear and unifying voice for regional planning organizations as we debate, shape and advance infrastructure legislation and programmatic opportunities.

We anxiously await the Senate's release of its surface transportation

**Anna Rosenbaum**

Communications Associate

**Erich W. Zimmermann**

Director of Transportation

Programs

To access past issues of  
*eRegions*, **visit our**  
**website.**

Make NARC your  
homepage —  
**click here to learn how.**

authorization bill. With the text rumored for release in the next 24 hours, Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) leaders have already announced agreement on:

- Passing a long-term measure, not a short-term fix;
- Keeping formulas for current core programs;
- Exhibiting fiscal responsibility by keeping with current funding levels (plus inflation);
- Focusing on policies that expand transportation opportunities for rural areas;
- Continuing efforts to leverage local resources in order to speed up transportation construction, create jobs, and support economic growth; and
- Requiring "better information sharing" regarding federal grants.

EPW is scheduled to mark up the bill this Thursday, May 15 at 10 a.m. Click **HERE** for more information on the hearing. Once information is available, NARC will assemble a comprehensive summary of MPO provisions (click **HERE** for the GROW America Act summary), issue a statement on behalf of the membership, and re-communicate our priorities, ideas and changes with EPW and other Senate offices. Please send us your reactions, congressional correspondence and related commentary. We look forward to continuing outreach, collaboration and advocacy for and with our Board, members and partners.

These topics are perfectly timed as we head into our Annual Conference next month. These and other critical infrastructure issues will take center stage for discussion, keynote addresses and peer networking. We hope to use this time to refine NARC's solutions and responses. We've got a lot of work to do together in the next couple of weeks!

See you in Kentucky!

Shannon

---

## **PROGRAMUPDATE**

**The National Climate Assessment:** On Tuesday May 6, the White House hosted a stakeholder event featuring speakers from the Administration and authors of the *Third National Climate*

*Assessment* report released this week. During the event, the speakers asserted that *every* American will find something in the *National Climate Assessment* that matters to them. The report summarizes the impacts of climate change on the U.S. today and in the future. Specifically, it explores how climate change will impact eight distinct regions in the U.S. in a variety of ways. It also focuses on how climate change will affect crucial economic sectors like water management, transportation, agriculture, human health, energy, and land use. It also provides a range of strategies that can be taken at the local, state, and federal level to implement cost-effective plans for the looming impacts of climate change. To read the overview and full report click [HERE](#).

**EPA Releases EnviroAtlas Ecosystem Mapping Tool:** Last week, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released [EnviroAtlas](#), a web-based interactive tool that helps decision makers understand the implications of planning and policy decisions on our fragile ecosystems and the communities who depend on services from these ecosystems. EnviroAtlas allows users to visualize and analyze how decisions impact ecosystems and their ability to provide goods and services through data, maps, information, and tools.

---

## POLICYUPDATE

*The Senate is in session; the House is in recess.*

**Appropriations Update:** Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee approved the 302(b) allocations for the 12 annual appropriations bills. These allocations set the top-line discretionary spending limits for fiscal year (FY) 2015 appropriations, which will remain level for most federal programs. The allocations adhere to the overall \$1.014 trillion discretionary top line codified as part of the December budget deal, as well as separate defense and non-defense spending caps of \$521.3 billion and \$492.4 billion, respectively. The Committee also advanced its FY15 *Commerce-Justice-Science* appropriations bill, providing \$51.2 billion in discretionary funding, a \$398 million reduction from FY14 enacted levels. For the Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Committee provides \$247.5 million, \$1 million above FY14 and \$682,000 below the President's request. Of that funding, \$210.5 million will be for EDA programs (\$1 million above FY14, \$500,000 above request) and is broken out as follows:

Program	Amount (in millions)
Public Works	\$101
Partnership Planning	\$31
Technical Assistance	\$12
Research & Evaluation	\$1.5
Trade Adjustment Assistance	\$10
Economic Adjustment Assistance	\$40
Innovative Manufacturing Loans	\$5
Assistance to Coal Mining Communities	\$10

Click [HERE](#) to see the Committee's summary (EDA starts on pg 10).

**Water Resources Bill Agreement:** Last week, the lead conferees from both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate announced agreement for moving forward the *Water Resources Reform and Development Act* authorization, HR 3080. This week the conference report paperwork will be filed and final votes in both Chambers can occur. Full details on the final legislation will not be released until the conference report is filed.

**Amendment Offered to Senate Energy Legislation for New Grant Program:** Last week, Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) filed an amendment to [S.2262](#), the *Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act*, which will create a pilot program within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to provide grants to encourage energy efficiency of water facilities, saving both energy and water. If the amendment is agreed to, DOE would award competitive, merit-reviewed grants to three to five water authorities, utilities, municipalities, or water districts for innovative, technology-based projects that increase energy efficiency, conserve water, and support advanced automated systems that provide real-time data on energy and water. The amendment authorizes \$7.5M for the program, to be funded through reallocation of unobligated resources intended to carry out energy efficiency and renewable energy activities. Click [HERE](#) for more information on the bill.

**Secretary Foxx Testifies before Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:** U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx gave testimony regarding the reauthorization of surface transportation programs and the Administration's recently released surface transportation reauthorization proposal, the *GROW AMERICA Act*. Secretary Foxx began by stressing the urgency of this year's transportation reauthorization, given the looming highway trust fund (HTF) shortfall. He indicated that the highway account will not make it

through the summer; the transit account will be insolvent by October. Without a solution, Foxx indicated that transportation projects will have to be slowed or stopped. In regard to the reauthorization proposal, Foxx remarked that it would increase overall investment and system safety, improve freight and project delivery, and better connect communities. The hearing can be found [HERE](#).

#### **Senate Finance Committee Considers Transportation Funding**

**Options:** The Senate Finance Committee last week held a hearing to consider how to fund the nation's highway and transit systems in future years. This conversation is especially important because the HTF is facing insolvency and has too few deposits from fuel taxes to cover current spending levels. Perhaps most striking was the testimony delivered by Dr. Joseph Kile, Assistant Director for Microeconomic Studies Division at the Congressional Budget Office, who spelled out in stark terms the options facing Congress over the next decade:

- Reduce spending to match expected gas tax receipts. This would require NO new obligations for one year to allow the HTF accounts to "catch up," after which spending from the highway account would be cut 30% and from the transit account by 65%.
- Increase revenue. Other options exist, but the most likely – a gas tax increase – would have to be 10 to 15 cents per gallon to maintain current spending.
- Continue to transfer funds from the Treasury. As it has done for several years now, Congress would have to transfer \$18 billion in fiscal year 2015 and \$13-18 billion each year after to keep the HTF solvent.

To watch this hearing and read various testimony, click [HERE](#). To read Dr. Kile's testimony, click [HERE](#).

#### **House Appropriations Subcommittee Passes \$52 Billion**

**Transportation and Housing Spending Bill:** The transportation, housing and urban development bill passed the House Appropriations subcommittee last week. The bill cuts *Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery* (TIGER) competitive grants by \$500 million to \$100 million and reduces the list of qualifying projects; cuts deeply the *Essential Air Service Program*; and reduces overall

resources for transportation by approximately \$1.1 billion. Click [HERE](#) for additional information about the bill.

---

## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants still open!

### **USDA – \$78 Million Available for Local Food Enterprises**

*Deadline: June 20* – Click [HERE](#) for AMS Farmer's Market and Local Foods Program.

*Deadline: Rolling* – Click [HERE](#) for Rural Development's Business & Industry Guaranteed Loan Program.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced \$78 million in funding for local and regional food systems including: food hubs, farmers markets, aggregation and processing facilities, distribution services, and other local food business enterprises. \$30 million of this funding is available through competitive grants via the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) Farmers Market and Local Foods Promotion Program.

### **EPA - Technical Assistance Funding for Communities Interested in Integrated Planning**

*Letters of Interest Deadline: June 27, 5:00 PM ET*

The U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management is accepting letters of interest from communities seeking technical support to develop and implement an integrated planning approach to meeting Clean Water Act requirements for municipal wastewater and stormwater management. The value of the total EPA assistance available in 2014 is approximately \$335,000, and EPA anticipates providing assistance to five communities. Each applicant may submit only one letter of interest, and applicants may apply for project periods of up to nine months. Letters should be submitted by email to Kevin Weiss at [JP\\_Tech\\_Assistance@epa.gov](mailto:JP_Tech_Assistance@epa.gov).

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of events still open!

### **WEBINAR: Integrated Water Strategies at the Urban Fringe**

*May 14, 2:00-3:30 PM ET*

This webinar explores a green infrastructure approach to conservation planning and how it can improve ecological function and enhance biodiversity in design projects at the urban fringe and in urbanizing

watersheds. Case studies on the Chesapeake Bay and New York City watersheds will be presented. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**WEBINAR: Introduction to LGBT Aging**

*May 15, 3:00 PM*

This webinar will present the culture and needs of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT) older adults. Tim R. Johnston, Ph.D. of the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging will review LGBT history, the unique vulnerabilities and needs of LGBT older adults, and best practices for making aging network services providers welcoming to LGBT older adults. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**EVENT: 2nd Annual Emerald Coast Transportation Symposium**

*May 29-30, Pensacola Beach, FL*

This symposium is a forum for transportation leadership to explore cross-organization collaboration, develop lasting local and regional partnerships, share best practices in transportation, and give innovators a platform to inspire others. Professionals and policy-makers will discuss ways in which we can adapt our transportation system to 21st century economic and environmental realities. Click [HERE](#) for more information and to register.

**CONFERENCE: NARC's 48th Annual Conference and Exhibition**

*June 6-11, Louisville, KY*

The Annual Conference and Exhibition is the largest national event focused on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education. Held annually in June, NARC's Annual Conference is the premier place to learn how to engage in effective regional collaboration. Click [HERE](#) to access the draft agenda, registration and hotel information. See you in Louisville!

We are sending you this email primarily for your information, to meet your needs, further our valued relationship and because you requested to receive electronic newsletters from the National Association of Regional Councils. Please forward as appropriate.

[Unsubscribe](#) lindsey@narc.org from this list.

Our mailing address is:  
National Association of Regional Councils  
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 305  
Washington, DC 20002

[Add us to your address book](#)

Copyright (C) 2014 National Association of Regional Councils All rights reserved.

[Forward](#) this email to a friend  
[Update your profile](#)

