

May 16, 2016 [View this email in your browser](#)



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members,

Washington, D.C. is celebrating National Infrastructure Week with a series of events highlighting why *Infrastructure Matters*. From broadband to bridges, roads, and public transportation, infrastructure keeps local economies humming. It's also Bike to Work Month. Do you have an Infrastructure Week or Bike to Work event? If so, tell us about it and send us your photos (tweet to [@NARCregions](#) or send to info@narc.org).

See you soon!
Leslie

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Appropriations Update

On May 12, Congress began passing FY17 appropriations bills with a 90-8 vote on the Senate's Energy and Water bill. The \$37.5 billion bill represented a \$355 million increase over FY16 and

partially funds water infrastructure projects for the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation.

The Senate Appropriations Committee on April 21 approved both the Transportation-Housing and Commerce-Justice bills. The Transportation-Housing bill will be considered by the Senate this week and provides \$56.5 billion in funding, a cut of \$827 million from the current year. NARC priorities were included: \$525 million for TIGER grants, \$2.3 billion for the transit capital improvement program, and \$44 billion for highways. Housing programs were funded at \$56.3 billion, up \$563 million from FY16. The Commerce-Justice bill provides \$56.3 billion in funding, an increase of \$563 million, and includes \$2.3 billion for state and local law enforcement and crime prevention grants.

The House is slightly behind the Senate. Two appropriations subcommittees will vote this week on the Transportation-Housing and Commerce-Justice bills. Last month the Energy and Water Subcommittee approved its legislation but has not been scheduled for full House consideration. No action has been scheduled on other bills of importance to local governments, such as the Interior-Environment bill and the Labor-Health-Education bill.

While it is likely that a number of appropriations bills will pass the Senate and House to go to conference committees and be signed by the president this year, it is also likely that when the end of the fiscal year comes on September 30, a number of other appropriations bills will be outstanding and a continuing resolution will have to be adopted to keep the government operating. Exactly what happens after the elections is anyone's guess.

Zika Legislation

Lawmakers in both chambers will wrestle with a myriad of funding proposals to combat the Zika virus this week. House Republicans unveiled a \$622 million measure to combat the virus and will vote on it later this week. The bill is financed by cuts to unspent funding passed in 2014 to battle Ebola as well as leftover funding at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Senate is scheduled to vote on several competing Zika proposals on Tuesday, with a \$1.1 billion bipartisan plan likely to gain passage in a procedural vote. The Zika funds would be attached to a separate spending bill for the departments of Transportation, Veterans Affairs, and Housing and Urban Development that Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) hopes can be finalized for Obama's signature before Congress goes on vacation in mid-July.

So far, the administration has transferred almost \$600 million in previously appropriated funding to anti-Zika efforts such as research on the virus and Zika-related birth defects, response teams to limit Zika's spread, and helping other countries fight the virus. Most of the money used so far has come from unspent funds from the \$5 billion provided to battle Ebola.

FEMA and NOAA Encourage Preparedness for the 2016 Hurricane Season

FEMA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are asking for your help to increase awareness and motivate individuals, families, businesses and communities to know their risk, get prepared, and stay informed before hurricane season. A **2016 Hurricane Seasonal Preparedness Digital Toolkit** includes resources to aid in spreading the word. Within the toolkit you will find: key messages; templates for letters to employees, press releases, and blog posts; social media tools and sample messages; and resource links, including infographics, videos, and other materials.

FEMA Introduces App

Have you downloaded the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) app to your personal or government-issued mobile device? Use the FEMA app to stay informed of weather alerts near you and in up to four additional locations across the nation. The FEMA app enables users to receive push notifications to their devices to remind them to take important steps to prepare their homes and families for disasters. The app provides users with safety and preparedness tips, a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and recovery centers, and

information on how to survive natural and man-made disasters. The latest version of the FEMA app is available for free in the **App Store** for Apple devices and **Google Play** for Android devices. The reminders are available in English and Spanish and are located in the “Prepare” section of the FEMA App.

NACo Testifies on Disaster Assistance

NACo President Sally Clark of El Paso County, CO warned a House panel last week that proposed changes in FEMA regulations would compromise the ability of state and local governments to aid communities in their recovery from major disaster. In testimony before the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management on policy changes intended to reign in federal disaster-assistance spending, Clark noted that FEMA’s recent “disaster deductible” proposal - which would require states and locals to meet certain mitigation requirements before receiving disaster aid from FEMA - would result in unjustified shifting of disaster recovery costs to state and local governments with less resources to bear the costs , compromising the ability to recover from disasters.

Clark’s testimony emphasized three principles to guide Congress in considering any policy changes relative to federal disaster spending: 1) federal spending on disasters should be viewed in the context of disaster spending by all levels of government and the capacity of each level of government to fund recovery efforts; 2) federal disaster expenditures should decrease only as a result of disasters becoming less costly overall, rather than cost shifts to local governments; 3) local disaster mitigation efforts have proven effective at decreasing the overall costs for disasters and should be supported and incentivized by the federal government. Clark further outlined her experiences with wildfires in El Paso County and highlighted successful federal-state-local collaborations in disaster mitigation efforts.

OTHER NEWS

National Infrastructure Week

This week, May 16 – 20, has been declared National Infrastructure Week and includes a series of events, media coverage, education, and advocacy efforts to elevate infrastructure as a critical issue impacting all Americans. The theme in 2016 – *Infrastructure Matters* – is intended to tell the story of what infrastructure means to Americans and how it matters, in big and small ways, to our country, our economy, our quality of life, our safety, and our communities. The focus is on roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, airports, pipes, the power grid, and broadband. Infrastructure Week is sponsored by America’s **business, labor, and policy-making leadership**, and comprised of more than **100 organizations** from all sectors of America’s economy, a non-partisan coalition of organizations dedicated to strengthening America by rebuilding our infrastructure. Infrastructure Week unites both traditional stakeholders with those whose lives, livelihoods and businesses run on infrastructure: manufacturers, retailers, passengers, travel and tourism companies, and the towns, counties, and cities home to them.

Libraries Create Opportunities for Families to Learn Together

Urban Libraries Council's (ULC) new report, *Leadership Brief: Libraries Supporting Family Learning*, builds on the partnership between ULC and the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) to increase awareness of the role that libraries play in creating opportunities for families to learn together. Libraries stand out as the leading community entity providing diverse opportunities for mothers, children, and the whole family unit to learn and thrive together. The publication demonstrates how public libraries are trusted community hubs with unique education assets that contribute to families that are stronger educationally and economically. Included in the *Brief* are examples from leading libraries. These examples show only a few ways that libraries are playing a central role as education leaders and partners by engaging children and parents in learning together.

MEMBER REQUESTS

Please email your responses to anna@narc.org.

SWCCOG: The Southwest Colorado Council of Governments (SWCCOG) was approached by a small regional non-profit focused on weatherization and sustainability to come under the SWCCOG umbrella. The SWCCOG Board is interested but hesitant to move forward too quickly, as they are wary of the challenges of incorporating a non-profit into the COG. We are looking for other regional organizations that have attempted or completed something similar.

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Executive Director

Metroplan, Little Rock, Arkansas

Senior Accountant

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Executive Director

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, Mobile, AL

Chief Talent Officer

Town of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Webinar: Will the Nation's Model Energy Code Save Energy?

May 18, 2:00 PM ET

The International Code Council (ICC) committee action hearings (CAH) just wrapped up in Louisville, KY, the first step in developing the final 2018 version of America's Model Energy Code (the IECC) for residential and commercial buildings this fall. Join this ICLEI webinar to review the results of the CAH and find out why policy makers are alarmed that this year's IECC update may increase energy use and utility bills, especially in new residential construction.

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