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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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eRegions

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Dear Colleagues,

Good news from Washington! Last week, the Senate confirmed Jay Williams as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. I first met Jay when he was Mayor Williams of Youngstown, Ohio and I know he is going to bring the same energy, charisma, and problem-solving approach to leading EDA that have been the hallmarks of his entire career. Congratulations Jay!

As all of you know, our Annual Conference is fast approaching. NARC just confirmed U.S. DOT's Assistant Secretary for Budget and Chief Financial

[PROGRAM UPDATE](#) [POLICY UPDATE](#)
[GRANT OPPORTUNITIES](#) [UPCOMING EVENTS](#)



Connect with NARC on Twitter and Facebook Today!

By creating a social media presence, NARC will be able to connect with members, advocates, and government agencies on our regions' behalf in real-time and on an ongoing basis. Connect with NARC and our executive director on Twitter, @NARCregions and @JoannaNARC respectively. Check out our Facebook page [HERE](#).

PROGRAM UPDATE

NARC is at the 2014 SunShot Grand Challenge & Peer Review:

This week, Mia Colson is participating in the 2014 SunShot Grand Challenge Summit and Peer Review in Anaheim, California. Hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy, the Summit is a four day event that features presentations from top solar leaders, plenary sessions, industry workshops, a SunShot portfolio peer review, and a technology

Officer, Sylvia Garcia, to speak at the Annual Conference on the *Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act* (TIFIA) program. Please come prepared with your program and project-specific questions, so you can capitalize on this innovative financing program.

Finally, you can follow us on Twitter! NARC just launched our Twitter handle, @NARCregions. You can also follow me, @JoannaNARC. Both are designed to give you up-to-the-minute information about NARC's work in Washington.

See you in Louisville!
Joanna

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Southwestern Pennsylvania
Commission

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Deputy Director

Mia Colson

forum. NARC is excited to be one of the 300+ SunShot awardees who will be showcasing their SunShot Initiative projects at the Summit this year. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the event.

POLICYUPDATE

Congress is in session.

Appropriations Update: Appropriators continue to advance annual appropriations bills. This week both Chambers will work on multiple bills, with some preparing for floor action. The Senate will unveil, and set for a Thursday approval, its fiscal year (FY) 2015 302(b) allocations for subcommittees, while maintaining the overall \$1.014 trillion bicameral agreement set last December. The Senate will also look to advance two appropriations bills this week, including Agriculture. The House will also work on the Agriculture spending bill, as well as markup the \$52 billion FY15 [Transportation-HUD](#) spending bill this Wednesday, May 21, at 10 AM ET.

FY15 Agriculture Appropriations Bill Released: The FY15 Agriculture appropriations bill was released today by the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, and is scheduled to be considered in subcommittee tomorrow. The bill funds important agricultural and food programs and services, including: food and medical product safety; animal and plant health programs; rural development and farm services; marketplace oversight; and nutrition programs. The proposed legislation totals \$142.5 billion in discretionary and mandatory funding. Click [HERE](#) to read the press release and highlights of the bill. Click [HERE](#) to read the bill text.

EDA Announces New Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development: Last week, the U.S. Senate confirmed Jay Williams as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) stated that Jay "will be responsible for fulfilling the Agency's mission of leading the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, [and] preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy." Click [HERE](#) for the release.

Water Resources Bill Advances in Congress: Last Thursday, the Senate Environment & Public Works and House Transportation &

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Infrastructure Committees released the conference report for the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), HR 3080. The bill creates a new *Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA)*, to provide loans or loan guarantees through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Corps of Engineers for eligible water infrastructure projects, including water and wastewater.

- Projects must be larger than \$20 million (or \$5 million for small communities of less than 25,000 residents).
- A WIFIA loan cannot finance more than 49% of the project (small communities can receive 100% financing).
- Total federally backed financing cannot exceed 80%.
- Non-federal financing for a project cannot be tax exempt.
- State Infrastructure Financing Authorities (SRFs) are authorized to secure loans, that must be repaid within 35 years.

The bill authorizes EPA and Corps each to receive \$175 million over five years for loans and loan guarantees. The bill also includes programmatic changes to the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund* (SRF) program, but does not reauthorize the program or include new funding. The changes require that recipients maximize the potential for efficient water use, reuse, recapture, conservation, and energy conservation, extends the loan repayment period to 30 years (currently 20 years), and allows for additional subsidization, including forgiveness of principal and negative interest loans. The bill directs EPA to review the formula for allotting SRF funds among the states and submit a report to Congress within 18 months. The House is scheduled to vote on Tuesday; the Senate later this week. Click [HERE](#) for conference report and related bill documents.

NARC Releases Summary of EPW's *MAP-21 Reauthorization Act*:

The U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) released the *MAP-21 Reauthorization Act* (S. 2322), a multi-year reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs. Current law, the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act* (MAP-21), expires on September 30, 2014. Click [HERE](#) to read NARC's summary of sections relevant to metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and [HERE](#) to read NARC's press release concerning the bill.

Senate EPW Marks Up Transportation Bill: The Senate EPW Committee marked up the highway portion of the *MAP-21*

Reauthorization Act last week. After accepting twelve previously agreed-upon amendments en bloc, the bill was approved unanimously. The legislation contains \$265 billion in spending over six years, which is equal to current funding plus inflation. Additional funding is needed to pay for the legislation, but the Finance Committee's solution for that will come later. Rail and transit titles are also on the horizon.

Congresswoman Annie Kuster Introduces *DRIVE Now Act*: In an effort to prevent HTF insolvency, Congresswoman Annie Kuster (D-NH) introduced the *DRIVE Now Act* that could potentially provide a short-term fix while Congress works on passing long-term reauthorization. Her bill calls for a one-time payment of \$5 billion to the HTF. Click [HERE](#) for more information on the bill.

Secretary Foxx Warns States That Payments May Be Delayed: To prepare state transportation officials, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx sent a letter detailing the current state of the highway trust fund (HTF) and possible measures U.S. DOT would take if Congress doesn't act. The Department may have to institute cash management strategies – including delayed reimbursements – to keep the HTF solvent. Click [HERE](#) to read the letter, and [HERE](#) to view the HTF Ticker.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

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

DOL - Workforce Innovation Fund

Deadline: June 18

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recently announced the availability \$53 million in grants through the Workforce Innovation Fund. The Workforce Innovation Fund is “an initiative designed to strengthen public job training programs by: delivering employment and training services more efficiently and effectively, facilitating greater cooperation across workforce programs and funding streams, scaling best practices, and implementing rigorous evaluation techniques.” Click [HERE](#) for additional information, and [HERE](#) to apply.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

WEBINAR: GROW AMERICA Act

May 21, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM ET

****You must pre-register by tomorrow, May 20 to attend.****

U.S. DOT invites MPOs and regional councils to participate in a GROW AMERICA webinar that will highlight new programs and provide an overview of the Administration's four-year surface transportation reauthorization proposal. A Q&A session led by senior leadership from the Office of the Secretary, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will follow the presentation. Registrants are required to provide their name, organization, and email address, to receive an emailed confirmation containing their log-in information for the webinar. Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: Brownfields RLF

May 28, 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM ET

National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals will host a webinar, "Keys to Administering a Successful Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)," to discuss how local and regional organizations have used their brownfields RLF grants to spur brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. Click [HERE](#) to register, and [HERE](#) for more information on brownfields RLF grants.

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!

EVENT: SelectUSA Summer Forum - *Reinvesting in America, Creating Jobs at Home*

June 17, 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM ET, Washington, DC

**** You must RSVP [HERE](#) by June 6 to attend.****

The U.S. Department of Commerce and Congressman Frank Wolf invite you to this special event: *Reinvesting in America, Creating Jobs at Home*. From large multinational corporations to family-owned small businesses, U.S. businesses are discovering that bringing

manufacturing or services back to the United States makes economic sense. Please attend the SelectUSA Summer Forum to hear directly from companies that are reshoring and learn more about the key economic trends. Click [HERE](#) for information on SelectUSA. Contact Cora Dickson cora.dickson@trade.gov with any questions.

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