



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members,

It was wonderful to see many of you last week in the Triangle J region for NARC's 49th Annual Conference & Exhibition! Attendees heard from a variety of engaging speakers – both local and regional – and enjoyed unique experiences, including a special trip to Durham, mobile workshops exploring Raleigh, and a Gala Awards Dinner. We have put many of the **presentations** from the conference online and will continue to add more as we get additional permissions. For me, the highlight of the conference had to be hearing from Mrs. Barbara Scheiber, wife of Mr. Walter A. Scheiber, NARC's first President for whom our top leadership honor is named. We have put her moving **remarks** on our website, along with a **video** of her presentation. A huge thanks to the Scheiber family for their continued commitment to NARC. And congratulations to Tom Wilkinson, Jr., Executive Director of Brazos Valley Council of Governments, who won the 2015 Scheiber Award!

I also want to thank the **Triangle J Council of Governments**, our co-host for this year's conference. The success of this conference was due in large part to their support, their great ideas, and their passion to support their region, and regions nationwide.

And of course, a big NARC welcome to our new Board of Directors and Executive Directors Council! I look forward to working with all of you.

Don't forget – next year is NARC's 50th Annual Conference & Exhibition, which will be in Salt Lake City, hosted by the Wasatch Front Regional Council!

Joanna L. Turner

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

In Brief

The Senate continues consideration of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (**HR 1735**). Among other things, the House is scheduled to consider the FY 2016 intelligence authorization (**HR 2596**) and may try again to vote on the Trade Adjustment Assistance component of the fast-track package (**HR 1314**).

Senators Introduce PORTS Act; Provides Governors New Authority to Intervene in Port Disputes

Senators Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN) introduced the Protecting Orderly and Responsible Transit of Shipments (PORTS) Act (**S 1519**), which amends the Taft-Hartley

provision in the Labor Relations Management Act (LRMA) to provide state governors powers currently reserved for the president, including the ability to petition the president to convene a board of inquiry to gather facts on a dispute. Once that board reports, governors could petition federal courts to enjoin slowdowns, strikes, or lockouts at ports in their states. The PORTS Act would explicitly include slowdowns as a trigger for Taft Hartley powers. Under PORTS, a governor would be able to direct the state's attorney general to seek an injunction, forcing employees back to work.

House Passes Permanent ITFA Extension

Last week, the House passed the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act (**HR 235**), by voice vote under suspension of the rules. The bill is a permanent extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA), initially passed in 1998 to preempt state and local governments from taxing broadband services. The most recent extension of ITFA expires on September 30. Many of NARC's sister state and local associations issued releases opposing the bill, including **the National Governors Association**, **the National League of Cities** (NLC), and **the National Association of Counties** (NACo). NLC, NACo, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors among other local government associations also sent a **joint letter** opposing the bill. The Senate has not yet passed similar legislation.

House Passes FY 16 THUD Appropriations

Last Tuesday, the House passed the FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) and Related Agencies appropriations bill (**HR 2577**), in a **216-210** vote. The legislation provides \$55 billion in discretionary spending for THUD programs, an increase of \$1.5 billion above FY 2015 levels and approximately \$10 billion below the president's FY 2016 budget request. Under the proposal, surface transportation programs receive level funding, including \$40.25 billion for highways and \$9.5 billion for transit. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program also receives level funding at \$3 billion. The bill includes a \$242 million cut to Amtrak's FY 2016 budget. In a **Statement of Administration policy**, the White House stated its opposition to the legislation, and signaled that the president likely would veto this version of THUD appropriations. The Senate Appropriations Committee still has not released its version of THUD appropriations, but a markup could occur later this month.

Senate Appropriations Committee Approves CJS Bill

Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the FY 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) and Related Agencies bill in a 27-3 vote. The bill provides \$8.5 billion for the U.S. Department of Commerce, which is a \$10 million increase from the FY 2015 enacted level, and \$300 million above the House Appropriations Committee bill. The bill also includes nearly \$28 billion for the U.S. Department of Justice, an increase of \$798 million from FY 15 and \$300 million above the House bill. The Senate proposal provides more than \$2 billion for state and local law enforcement and crime prevention grant programs, including \$382 million for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, which is a decrease of \$6 million from the FY 15 enacted level. The Senate has not yet scheduled a floor vote.

Defense Appropriations Bills Advance in Both Chambers

Last week, the House approved the FY 2016 appropriations bill (**HR 2685**) for the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) in a 278-149 vote. Meanwhile, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the bill in a 27-2 vote. Both bills provide approximately \$580 billion in discretionary funding for DOD, \$25 billion above the FY 2015 enacted level and equal to the president's budget request. Aligning with the budget resolution (**S. Con. Res. 11**), the bills adhere to the sequester caps for defense spending but add nearly \$90 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funds to meet the president's request.

OTHER NEWS

Foxx Promotes GROW America at NARC Conference

At NARC's 49th Annual Conference & Exhibition in Raleigh, North Carolina, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx addressed the mounting challenges faced by MPOs due to a lack of

certainty in federal funding. Foxx painted a dire picture of deteriorating infrastructure strained by population growth and increasing freight demand, and of a long list of necessary maintenance and expansion projects either stalled or waiting in the queue for federal funds. The Administration's *GROW AMERICA Act* would, according to Foxx, increase investment in all modes of surface transportation and give large MPOs a greater share of federal funding as well as greater control over the allocation of that funding.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MWCOG Hosts 7th Annual Wednesday's Child Match Party

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) hosted the 7th Annual Wednesday's Child Match Party, an opportunity for the youth featured on Wednesday's Child to meet prospective parents in a fun and more personal environment. The Ritz-Carlton at Pentagon City partnered with MWCOG for the event, providing a safe and exciting environment for the young people to present their personalities to their potential forever families.

Solar Ready II Case Study

Ten regional councils, part of the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge II Solar Ready II project, are highlighted in a new Solar Outreach Partnership **case study** out this month! The case study discusses the solar best management practices being implemented by all ten regional councils' local governments and the major accomplishments of the project thus far. To read the case study and learn more about the project, please visit the **Solar Ready II** website.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Transportation Planner

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, Vineland, NJ

Engineering Infrastructure Director

City of Fayetteville, Fayetteville, NC

Senior Regional Planner

Central Texas Council of Governments, Belton, TX

Project Delivery Specialist

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

New Funding for Development Support to Rural Cooperatives

Application Deadline: July 30, 2015

Today, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is accepting applications for grants to help rural cooperatives develop new markets for their products and services. USDA is making up to \$5.8 million in grants available to non-profit corporations and institutions of higher education through the **Rural Cooperative Development Grant** program.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

NARC Webinar: Green Infrastructure and Forestry Toolkit

June 24, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

NARC helped develop the Green Infrastructure and Forestry Toolkit (GIFT) to aid regional councils and local municipalities nationwide in the planning, development, and implementation of green

infrastructure programs. Featuring a series of essential resources, outreach templates, calculators, and GIS mapping tools, GIFT makes green infrastructure planning easily accessible to communities nationwide. Use the website to understand the costs and benefits of green infrastructure and community forestry, explore beginner and advanced modules to build your knowledge base, and learn how urban forestry impacts public health, energy use, and stormwater management. Join us for a free informational webinar on June 24.

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