



## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

This week, the House will consider a Financial Services spending bill HR 5485 and a number of bills under suspension of the rules.

The action will take place in the Senate with four votes to end debate on gun-related amendments to the FY 2017 Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill (HR 2578) on Monday evening. Although the gun control debate will take the headlines, the \$56.3 billion bill includes many important local government programs including funding for the US Census Bureau, Economic Development Administration, and criminal justice assistance programs. The bill was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee in April on a vote of 30 – 0.

Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) has proposed an amendment to eliminate funding the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), which NARC opposes. An additional amendment to cut the Census Bureau funding by \$148 million would eliminate proposed “ramp up” for the 2020 Census and reduce the opportunity for the Bureau to modernize the Census. The bill could fund \$2.3 billion for state and local criminal justice assistance, including the COPS hiring program and hiring of more than 1,200 community policies officers.

In addition to the debate on guns, the bill could face further policy battles in the Senate, including FBI funding and amendments to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation. A lengthy debate

is expected on the bill.

### **Senate Interior-Environment Bill Moves to Full Committee**

Spending bills for US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Interior Department programs also saw action last week. The Senate EPA-Interior Subcommittee Appropriations approved a \$32 billion bill for fiscal year 2017, which would cut funding for EPA and Interior Department programs and would prohibit implementation of the Waters of the US rule that expands federal jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act. The bill approved by the Committee would cut \$125 million from current spending levels.

Funding for clean water projects and the National Park Service would be increased above 2016 levels under the bill. The Committee also added funds for fighting wildfires. The full Senate Appropriations Committee will meet on the bill this week.

The House Appropriations Committee will consider its version of the bill later this week, as well.

### **NARC Calls on Senate Leaders to Consider S 2848**

Last week, NARC **joined with other local government organizations** calling on Senate leaders to bring up the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) S 2848 for debate this summer. The \$9 billion bill authorizes flood protection, navigation and ecosystem restoration projects under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was adopted by a Senate panel last month.

The Senate bill would make permanent the Water Infrastructure Finance and Investment Act (WIFIA) to make more funding available for water resource investment. S 2848 provides funding for the replacement of public and private lead service lines, provides funding for drinking water improvements, codifies EPA's Integrated Planning Framework to provide communities more flexible compliance schedules, supports innovate technologies to address water challenges and expresses support for water resources funding through the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed a more limited Water Resources Development Act bill, HR 5303, earlier this month.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **Solar Ready II Final Publication Released**

Available now on NARC's Solar Ready Regions **webpage**, this report captures the Solar Ready II team's national and regional impacts, accomplishments, and lessons learned over the 30-month grant period. In addition, it discusses the solar best management practices, trainings, and stakeholder engagement strategies deployed on a national level through regional councils to reduce solar soft costs and transform the solar markets in 10 regions across the US. The Solar Ready II project was funded by the US Department of Energy SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge II.

## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

### **Walking & Rolling Kept 3.5 Tons of Pollutants from Spewing Into San Antonio's Air**

The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) in San Antonio hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk & Roll Challenge in May. The aims of the challenge were to raise awareness of the connection between transportation and air quality, to promote new means of transportation, and to recognize employers and individuals committed to cleaner air and healthy living in the region. Using **NuRide.com** to view participants' records of walks, bike rides, bus rides, carpools, and trips saved, AACOG recorded that over 94,000 trips were taken or saved through alternative means, leading to a reduction in vehicle emissions of 1.2 million road miles and the prevention of 3.5 tons of ozone-forming pollutants from going into the air.

### **SEMCOG Announces Results of Commuter Challenge 2016**

During the month of May, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) held a **Commuter Challenge**, encouraging employees across the region to find alternative methods of traveling to work instead of driving alone, and reminding them of the benefits **alternative transportation** offers. Overall, the Commuter Challenge reduced carbon dioxide emissions by

over 166,000 pounds, surpassing the 130,000 pound goal. 500 participants **recorded** 6,200 green commute trips and traveled 270,000 miles in May. Quicken had the largest impact on air quality with a 35,133 pound reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

## FUNDING

*[View full list of grants!](#)*

### **HUD Announced the Availability of Approx. \$58 M for the Community Compass Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program**

Application Deadline: July 19

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) integrated technical assistance and capacity building program, Community Compass, is designed to help HUD's customers navigate housing and community development challenges with the knowledge, skills, tools, capacity, and systems to implement HUD programs and policies successfully. Local and state governments, tribal governments, nonprofits, for-profit organizations, and regional planning entities are eligible applicants. This year, HUD made explicit clarification that regional planning entities such as MPOs and COGs are eligible to apply to be providers of HUD technical assistance and training. Please see their **website** for more information on the **NOFA** (see page 12-13 for eligible applicants) and the application process.

## FEATURED JOBS

*[View full list of jobs!](#)*

### **Accountant**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Public Relations Intern**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Director of Community Development**

The City of Bozeman, Bozeman, MT

### **Chief Executive Officer**

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Sacramento, CA

### **Public Information Planner**

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

## EVENTS

*[View full list of events!](#)*

### **Save the Date! NARC's 2016 Executive Directors Conference and Board Retreat**

September 18-21 – South Bend, IN

Please join NARC and the Michiana Area Council of Governments this September in South Bend, IN for the annual Executive Directors Conference that is designed by and for Executive Directors of Councils of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations. This intimate conference brings executives together to discuss topics ranging from human resources and succession planning to what's new on the technological horizon. The conference also provides a great opportunity for networking and sharing of information on best practices. This year's conference will start with a reception on Sunday night and end with the Board of Directors Retreat on Wednesday. The Board Dinner will be Tuesday evening, time and location TBD. **Note:** *Please plan to arrive on Sunday, September 18 as we will not have hotel rooms available on Saturday night.*

## CONTACT US

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