



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members,

NARC is delighted to collaborate with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) to bring you our first joint conference for executive directors in Austin, Texas from August 9 - 11. ***Becoming Your Best: Professional Development Training*** will feature opportunities to network with your colleagues from across the country, share best practices, and explore opportunities for strengthening professional capacity and development. Join us for topics such as managing change, working with federal grants, and navigating fiduciary responsibilities. A draft agenda will be available shortly.

NARC's Executive Directors Council will meet on Sunday, August 9 from 1:00-4:00 PM prior to the start of the conference. The annual NARC Board of Directors retreat will take place immediately following the conference beginning with a Board dinner on Tuesday, August 11 at 6:00 PM, followed by a full day's meeting on Wednesday, August 12 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

You won't want to miss this informative meeting. Be sure to **register** now for early bird rates and **reserve** your room today!

See you in Austin!
Leslie

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

This Week in the Senate

Today the Senate will vote on the nomination of Peter Neffenger to head the Transportation Safety Administration and Daniel Elliott III as a member of the Surface Transportation Board. For the remainder of the week, the Senate will focus on Trade Promotion Authority and Trade Adjustment Assistance.

This Week in the House

This week, the House will vote on its version of the FY16 Interior and Environment appropriations bill (**HR 2822**), which would reduce the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) spending by \$718 million to \$7.4 billion. The legislation also prohibits the agency from implementing new regulations to limit greenhouse emissions from new and existing power plants and prevents it from altering the definition of "navigable waters" under the *Clean Water Act*. The House is also expected to consider the *Ratepayer Protection Act* (HR 2042), which allows for judicial review before states have to comply with any final EPA rule on carbon dioxide regulations for existing power plants, and **HR 2576**, which would revise the *Toxic Substances Control Act* to provide more authority to states to regulate chemicals.

USDOT's Highway Trust Fund Ticker is Back

The Highway Trust Fund (HTF) ticker is back on the U.S. Department of Transportation website, counting down the balance of the the HTF highway account, which is expected to dip below \$4 billion toward the end of July. The HTF mass transit account will dip below \$1 billion around the end of August. As early as the end of July, the Federal Highway Administration could stop daily reimbursements to states. To prevent such cash management strategies, Congress will need to extend federal highway and transit programs and address the insolvency of the HTF before the program expires on July 31.

Senate Passes Defense Authorization

Last week, the Senate approved its version of the *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA) for FY16 in a 71-25 vote. The bill authorizes \$496 billion for the U.S. Department of Defense base budget and \$89 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). The OCO funding is a mechanism that allows for increased overall defense spending while adhering to the statutory cap for the base defense budget. The President has threatened to veto any bill that includes increased OCO funding, instead recommending that Congress lift all discretionary budget caps for defense and non-defense spending. After completing the NDAA, the Senate failed to invoke cloture and proceed to the defense appropriations bill in a 50-45 vote.

Senate Committee Approves Interior, Environment Spending Bill

The Senate Appropriations Committee passed its FY16 Interior and Environment spending bill last week in a party-line vote of 16-14. The bill directs more than \$30 billion to the U.S. Department of Interior, EPA, and other agencies. In particular, the bill decreases EPA's budget by nearly \$540 million below the FY15 level, prohibits the agency from implementing new regulations to limit greenhouse emissions from new and existing power plants, and prevents it from altering the definition of "navigable waters" under the *Clean Water Act*. The House Appropriations Committee passed its own FY16 Interior and Environment spending bill, which will be considered by the full House this week.

Senate Introduces Passenger Rail Bill

Last Thursday, Senators Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) introduced the *Railroad Reform, Enhancement, and Efficiency Act (S 1626)*, a four-year passenger rail reauthorization. The Senate Commerce Committee will mark up the legislation on Thursday. As proposed, the bill includes a consolidated grant program and makes positive train control (PTC) implementation eligible for those funds. It authorizes an annual average of \$1.65 billion for grants to Amtrak, as well as \$570 million for federal-state partnership grants. In March, the House passed similar legislation, the *Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act (PRRIA, HR 749)*, in a 316-101 vote.

FirstNet Subject of House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee Hearing

The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communication and Technology held a hearing on the progress of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), which is responsible for developing a nationwide public safety broadband network. Acting Executive Director TJ Kennedy discussed FirstNet's strategic road map and the process for releasing a final request for proposals (RFP) in early 2016. During the testimony, Kennedy reviewed the plan for a five-year build-out of the network beginning once the final RFP is released. Ohio's Chief Information Officer Stu Davis also testified, telling the committee Ohio will pursue a regional approach when developing its network with neighboring states in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region V.

Chaffetz Introduces Online Sales Tax Bill

Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) introduced the *Remote Transactions Parity Act of 2015 (RTPA, HR 2775)*, which provides states with the authority to collect sales taxes on remote sales. The bipartisan bill has 19 cosponsors. The RTPA establishes a destination-based methodology for states to collect sales taxes. This legislation is supported by many of NARC's partner organizations, including the National Governors Association and the National Association of Counties, which have been arguing for such legislation for decades.

Severe Weather Events Letter

A bill introduced by Senator Thune to consolidate local Weather Forecasting Offices into six regional offices and reduce staff of the current offices has raised concerns of local emergency managers. The *National Weather Service Improvement Act (S. 1573)*, introduced by South Dakota Senator John Thune, is intended to strengthen the National Weather Service and is scheduled for a markup by the Senate Committee on Science, Commerce, and Transportation on June 24. Local emergency managers have joined with the National Association of Counties to express their concern for the impact on local emergency preparedness activities during severe weather events.

MEMBER REQUESTS

Email responses to anna@narc.org

MWCOG: Labor Market Data

Chuck Bean, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), is interested in learning how other NARC members use labor market data. MWCOG's Board of Directors identified regional economic competitiveness as its focus for the year, and is interested in developing a deeper understanding of the Washington region's industry and occupation outlook. Specifically, MWCOG would like to know:

1. How are you using labor market data? What projects are you applying it to?
2. What data sources do you use? Which do you find most useful and why?
3. Do you have experience or have you considered producing industry and occupational outlooks as part of your regional forecasting process? If so, what resources and tools are you using?
4. Aside from regional forecasting, have you developed any other labor market data products? If so, what products have been the most effective at engaging your Board of Directors as well as Economic Development Community?

Do you have experience using labor market data to support partnerships with employers or workforce investment boards around workforce development needs?

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Data Entry Operator

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Regional Services Director

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Community/Economic Development Manager

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, Richland, WA

Transportation Demand Management Program Manager

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Senior Transportation Planner

Pima Association of Governments, Tucson, AZ

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

FEMA FY15 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants

Applications Due: August 28 - 3:00 PM ET

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced \$180 million in funding

available through two Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs: Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM). These two grant programs assist state, local, tribal, and territorial governments in strengthening our nation's ability to reduce the potential cost of natural disasters to communities and their citizens. Both HMA FY15 Funding Opportunity Announcements can be found at www.grants.gov. Eligible applicants must apply for funding through the Mitigation eGrants system on the **FEMA Grants Portal**.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Don't Miss this NARC Event! Green Infrastructure and Forestry Toolkit and Webinar

June 24, 2:00 PM ET

Join NARC and Virginia Tech's Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability for an informational webinar on the Green Infrastructure & Forestry Toolkit (**GIFT**). GIFT is designed to be a one-stop-shop for information and resources on green infrastructure and urban forestry. Featuring a series of essential guides, outreach templates, calculators, GIS mapping tools, and case studies, GIFT makes green infrastructure planning easily accessible to communities nationwide.

Becoming Your Best: Professional Development Training for Executive Directors

August 9-11, Austin, TX

Join the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the 2015 Professional Development Training for Executive Directors conference in Austin, TX. At the first ever Professional Development Training for Executive Directors conference put on by NARC and NADO, you will have the opportunity to network, share best practices, and explore opportunities for strengthening professional capacity and development. You won't want to miss it!

CONTACT US

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