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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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eRegions

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EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Dear Colleagues,

Last week, I welcomed NARC's new Board of Directors in this column. Today, I want to welcome NARC's secret weapon – our Executive Directors Council (EDC).

I am thrilled to introduce all of you to our new leadership on the EDC. During our Annual Conference, NARC members elected Matt Stoll, the Executive Director (E.D.) of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho as the new Council Chair; Barry Seymour, the E.D. of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, as the First Vice Chair; and Jiten Shah, E.D. of the Green River Area Development District as the Second Vice Chair. And of course, Jim Hassinger, E.D. of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission is now the Immediate Past Chair.

Secret weapon? I think that's the best way to describe the EDC. NARC is unique among all of the State and Local Associations in Washington, in that we represent both the elected and appointed

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officials who make up the Boards of our member regional councils, and the professional staff who work for them. There is not a single other Association in DC that does both, and that is a great strength that we can leverage with potential funders, federal agencies, Members of Congress, and the Administration.

I want to thank our new leadership teams – both our new Board of Directors and our EDC – for your willingness to serve NARC. I am very much looking forward to an exciting and productive year under your leadership.

Best,

Joanna

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PROGRAMUPDATE

U.S. Commerce Department Accepting Applications for New Council Members:

The U.S. Department of Commerce is accepting applications for membership on the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NACIE) through July 14. NACIE is “a federal advisory committee that advises the Secretary of Commerce on issues related to accelerating innovation and expanding entrepreneurship, with an added focus on job-driven skills training that creates jobs and spurs innovation.” Up to 30 new NACIE members may be appointed for two-year term. **HERE** for additional information and to apply for membership.

POLICYUPDATE

Congress is in session.

Appropriations Update: Progress is stalled in the Senate’s advancement of a minibus bill (**HR 4660**, as amended) that includes FY15 Commerce-Justice-Science, Transportation-HUD, and Agriculture spending bills; consensus could not be reached on an amendment deal. This is likely the bellwether for advancing all other fiscal year (FY) 2015 appropriations efforts in the Senate. Meanwhile, the Senate Appropriations Committee will markup its Homeland Security and Financial Services bills early this week. In

the House, which has passed five of the 12 spending bills, efforts will return to the Agriculture and the Financial Services bills.

Workforce Bill to Advance in Senate: This week the Senate is likely to vote on HR 803, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, as amended), which would modernize and reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (PL 105-220) (WIA). WIA expired in 2003. Debate will focus on three amendments to the bill and a substitute amendment. NARC, in a coalition of local government officials and workforce development and planning professionals, sent a letter to the Senate urging opposition for an amendment offered by Sen. Flake (R-AZ). The Flake amendment would subject workforce areas to yearly threats of reorganization. Click [HERE](#) for the letter. Click [HERE](#) for more on HR 803. ***Call your Senator today and urge them to vote "No" on the Flake amendment.***

Energy Efficiency Bill Introduced: Last week Reps. Schwartz (D-PA), Gibson (R-NY), Crowley (D-NY), King (R-NY), and Neal (D-MA) introduced the Power, Efficiency and Resiliency (POWER) Act, which would modify tax incentives for combined heat and power (CHP) and waste heat to power (WHP). Click [HERE](#) for more information. A series of other energy bills will be voted on in the House this week, such as HR 3301, a cross-border energy infrastructure bill; HR 4899, for expanded offshore drilling, and other purposes; HR 6, for expedited approval of natural gas export; S 2086, on issues related to home heating fuel carrying and fuel shortage warning system; and, HR 4092, to boost energy efficiency programs at schools.

U.S. Labor Secretary Proposes Extending Family and Medical Leave Act Protections: U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez recently proposed extending protections of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to all eligible employees in legal same-sex marriages regardless of where they live. Currently the law only provides protections to those who live in a state that recognizes same-sex marriages. The proposed rule would extend FMLA protections to all legally married couples based on the law of the place where the marriage occurred, not where couples reside. "The basic promise of the FMLA is that no one should have to choose between succeeding at work and being a loving family caregiver," said Secretary Perez. Click [HERE](#) for additional

information.

U.S. Labor Secretary Supports Mayors' Resolution Calling for an Increase in the Minimum Wage:

At the United States Conference of Mayors meeting currently underway in Dallas, Texas, a resolution is under consideration that calls for an increase in the national minimum wage. The resolution urges Congress to raise the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10 per hour, and supports state and local government efforts to set their own minimum wages above the federal minimum wage. Secretary Perez voiced his support stating that "I applaud San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee and his colleagues from cities across the country for leading on this issue and introducing the resolution" and "I urge its swift adoption." Click [HERE](#) for the Secretary's full statement.

President Signs WRRDA: Last week, President Obama signed the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA), which authorizes Army Corps of Engineers research and capital projects. The President used the signing ceremony to urge Congress to pass a long-term transportation reauthorization this summer. Read a summary of WRRDA [HERE](#) and the President's remarks [HERE](#).

Highway Trust Fund: Short-Term Fix, Part One: Earlier last week, U.S. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Wyden (D-OR) announced his intention to develop a short term infusion into the rapidly diminishing Highway Trust Fund (HTF), to keep it operating past the anticipated late July default. Sen. Wyden's approach would extend the HTF for another six months, at a cost of approximately \$10 billion. The missing piece is how Sen. Wyden intends to pay for the patch, but Ranking Member Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) has stated he believes that workable, short-term HTF funding solutions exist.

Highway Trust Fund: Short-Term Fix, Part Two: One funding idea that has already died on the vine is the U.S. House of Representatives' proposal to pay for the HTF patch by eliminating Saturday U.S. Postal Service. This proposal has a number of practical problems, and when numerous rank-and-file Republicans opposed it, leadership decided to look for other solutions. Rep. Cantor's (R-VA) primary defeat and imminent departure from

leadership gave House Republicans the opportunity to abandon this already unpopular idea. Yesterday, newly chosen Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) indicated that they plan to move in a new direction.

Highway Trust Fund: Long-Term Solvency, Part One: Last week, Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Bob Corker (R-TN) floated a plan to increase the nation's fuel tax by twelve cents over two years, and index the tax rate for inflation. This increase would help erase the purchasing power erosion of the gas tax that has occurred since the tax was last increased in 1993. The Senators' plan would offset the increased fuel tax by making permanent several currently temporary tax provisions, though no details are available at this time. Legislative language has not yet been released. Click [HERE](#) for Sen. Corker's release, [HERE](#) for Sen. Murphy's release, and [HERE](#) for a one-page summary of the proposal. Click [HERE](#) for NARC's statement on the proposal.

Highway Trust Fund: Long-Term Solvency, Part Two: Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) introduced an alternative plan to provide long-term increased funding to the HTF. His proposal, The Repeal and Rebuild Act (HR 4848), would repeal the federal gas tax and replace it with a wholesale tax on barrels of oil that are processed into gasoline at \$6.75 per barrel (indexed to the National Highway Construction Cost Index and to CAFE standards to account for decreased fuel consumption attributed to the fuel economy standard). The diesel tax would remain in place and be indexed. In addition, Rep. DeFazio's plan would bond the future revenue to make up the looming HTF shortfall. The resulting changes would allow for a \$324 billion six-year authorization, and a near-term reduction in the price that consumers pay in fuel tax (eventually, the indexing will increase what drivers contribute at the pump from current levels, however). Click [HERE](#) for two-page summary of the proposal, and [HERE](#) for a video of DeFazio discussing his proposal.

The Shortfall: In follow-up to testimony given by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) before the Senate Finance Committee in May, CBO provided detailed answers to questions posed by Senators. Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) asked how the looming shortfall impacts local governments' ability to plan for the future. CBO stated in part, "The possibility of such reductions

[in federal funding]—and even larger ones in some years—creates uncertainty that makes program planning difficult for state and local governments and for private contractors, and it adds to the risk that some planned projects will not be started and that work on some ongoing projects might be delayed.” Read the rest of the answer to Sen. Bennet’s question and all of the questions that were posed to CBO [HERE](#).

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

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

EPA’s Clean Air Excellence Awards

Applications Due: September 12, 2014

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is now accepting applications for the 2015 Clean Air Excellence Awards Program, which recognizes and honors individuals and organizations whose efforts have helped to make progress in achieving cleaner air. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

CONFERENCE: 100th ICMA Annual Conference

September 14-17; Charlotte, NC

The [ICMA 100th Annual Conference](#), is the premier conference for professionals in local-government management. Join us for 4-days of LEADERSHIP, LEGACY, AND LEARNING! ICMA’s 100th is the must-attend event of the year for professionals in local-government management. [Register online](#) by July 8 to save the most on your conference registration. Second registration deadline to save on your registration is August 14. If you are not a member, join ICMA to get a deep discount on conference registration and save 50% on your first year’s membership dues. Contact membership@icma.org for more information.

NARC CONFERENCE: Executive Directors’ Conference

September 21 - 24; Des Moines, IA

Join the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and NARC for the 2014 Executive Directors’ Conference in Des

Moines, IA. Dates and additional information will be available in early 2014.

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