

July 2, 2018 [View this email in your browser](#)



NARC Legislative Briefings

Over the next two months, NARC is offering weekly legislative briefings designed to bring you up-to-date with current legislative trends and the ways in which these bills might impact regions. Here is a preliminary schedule of those briefings:

July 11, 3:00 PM ET: Farm Bill

This session will focus on the differences between the House and Senate Farm Bills, and the final bill that NARC hopes the House and Senate will adopt and send to the president for his signature.

July 18, 3:00 PM ET: Federal Water Pollution Control Act

This session will focus on a bill to codify the Environmental Protection Agency Integrated Planning requirements that will improve the water infrastructure planning process for local governments expected to be introduced to the House.

July 25, 3:00 PM ET: FY 2019 Budget and Appropriations

This session will focus on the FY 2019 budget and appropriations process, and how programs that are important to localities and regions are being funded compared to last year.

Other sessions will focus on transportation, automated vehicles legislation, and the likely congressional agenda that will begin after Labor Day – exact dates and times will be announced. Within days of the mid-term elections, NARC will host a conference call laying out what the election outcome means for the remainder of the 115th Congress and the 116th Congress, which begins January 3, 2019.

The call-in information for these legislative briefings is below:

- Call-in Number: (571) 317-3122
- Access Code: 480-330-989
- Audio Pin: #

Contact Maci Morin at maci.morin@narc.org or Neil Bomberg at neil@narc.org with questions.

NARC Helping to Plan National Workshop on Community Resilience

NARC is working with the National Institute of Standards and Technology and several other organizations to plan a national workshop on *Data and Information Needs to Improve Community Resilience Planning* that will take place October 25-26 in Rockville, MD. The workshop will advance the understanding of community resilience decision-making and information needs to help guide the development of tools that support resilience planning and implementation to inform recovery decisions that allow a community to “build back better.” If you or a staff member would be interested in participating, contact Cameron Herbolsheimer at cameron@narc.org.

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Senate returns July 9; House returns July 10.

With Senate Passage of Farm Bill, Congress Prepares for Conference

By a largely bipartisan vote of 86-11, the Senate passed its version of the *Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (HR 2)*, also known as the Farm Bill. The Senate bill differs from the House version in that it generally maintains the structure of the 2014 Farm Bill. The Senate rejected the House's language on stricter work requirements and eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) but does include measures aimed at reducing SNAP fraud and expanding job pilot programs. Their bill includes a one-year authorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which has been pushed back multiple times over the past year. Other key wins for localities in the Senate version include:

- The creation of the Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program, helping localities strengthen local economies through job accelerator partnerships with the private sector and secondary education institutions;
- Reinstating the Undersecretary of Rural Development;
- Codifying an interagency, "Council on Rural Community Innovation and Economic Development," to leverage federal resources for rural localities;
- Expanding language for the Strategic Economic and Community Development Program, which incentivizes regional collaboration on rural economic development efforts (also included in the House version).

Because the 2014 Farm Bill legislation expires on September 30, Congress must act quickly to hammer out the differences between the House and Senate bills. Congressional leadership will soon appoint a conference committee to do so, which is expected to convene sometime after the July 4 recess. Once they agree on a compromise bill, the new bill must be passed by both chambers before it will be sent to the president's desk.

Water Infrastructure Bill

A bill entitled the *Water Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2018* — aimed at helping to ease the financial burdens of the *Clean Water Act (CWA)* — has been drafted by Reps. Bob Gibbs (R-OH) and Bob Latta (R-OH) and may be introduced as early as July 14. Drafted with the support of the National League of Cities (NLC) and National Association of Counties (NACo), the bill would codify the *Integrated Planning Framework* originally initiated in 2012 to allow local governments to examine all of their CWA obligations together in a comprehensive fashion and propose a compliance strategy to address those requirements in the most cost-effective way. The bill would require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use this approach when dealing with CWA improvements at the local and regional levels. The approach has garnered wide bipartisan support and has effectively empowered many local governments to better meet their CWA obligations. In the next several days you will receive information, including a request to reach out to your representative and ask them to co-sponsor the bill.

NARC Participates in USDA Rural Workforce Ideation Session

Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Innovation Center invited NARC and other key partners to its headquarters to discuss the challenges and opportunities around workforce issues. Moving forward, NARC will be working with this group to share information on emerging trends and best practices, identify resources and areas for policy alignment, and create new opportunities for partnerships and collaboration. We will also explore the development of several workforce solutions for rural areas.

EPA and Army Seek Public Comment on Proposed Rule to Repeal 2015 WOTUS Definition

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) released a **supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking** on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule last Friday. In a **public statement**, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said, "by issuing today's supplemental proposal, we are responding to public feedback, expanding opportunities for comment, and providing clarity and transparency in the rulemaking process... We are making it clear that we are proposing to permanently and completely repeal the 2015 WOTUS rule and keep the pre-2015 regulatory framework in place as we work on a new, improved WOTUS definition." The agencies are issuing this notice to give the public an opportunity to comment on the additional considerations related to this appeal. The public comment period will be open for 30

days following the publication of this supplemental notice in the Federal Register. Once the public comment period opens, go to [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and submit your comment under Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2017-0203.

OTHER NEWS

What City Leaders Should Know about the Supreme Court's Union Ruling

The Supreme Court held a 5-4 decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*. This decision has two implications: 1) allowing public sector employers and unions mandating employees that do not join the union must pay their "fair share" of collective bargaining costs violates the First Amendment, and 2) employees must "affirmatively consent" to join the union. Justice Kagan, who dissented in this case, said that the decision would have "large-scale consequences." She said that many state and local governments "have found agency fees the best way to ensure a stable and productive relationship with an exclusive bargaining agent."

FEMA Continues to Coordinate Assistance as TSA Program Ends for Harvey, Irma, and Maria Survivors

FEMA ended the Transitional Sheltering Assistance Program (TSA) on June 30th after 10 months of providing emergency shelter. The program was a temporary solution for Hurricane Harvey, Irma and Maria survivors, aimed at providing emergency shelter while seeking permanent housing solutions. FEMA has conducted outreach and states that 97% of those enrolled in the program have successfully transitioned to more permanent housing.

Celebrate Park and Recreation Month

It's Park and Recreation Month, and this month's theme is "Change Your Parks and Trails." The campaign has kicked off and is being led by America Walks, Healthy Living by Design, and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). NRPA tells us that "outdoor activity is important to the health and wellness of individuals and communities. Take time this month to explore parks and trails, find ways to improve access to parks for all community members, and share your tales of the trails to encourage more to get out and walk." Follow the conversation using [#Walk4Change](#) on social media and resources are available on [NRPA's website](#). You can also check out the presentations from our NARC Annual Conference session, *Reshaping the Role of Parks, Recreational Areas, and Green Space to Enhance Livability*, at the bottom of [the conference page](#).

REGION SPOTLIGHT

MAPA Joins City of Blair to Create New Workforce Housing Program

The Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) has partnered with the City of Blair to build new workforce housing in the community. A revolving fund of over \$900,000 has been established, with grants from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and Nebraska Investment Finance Authority. MAPA will administer the grant and support a critical effort in the community. "Workforce housing is a huge need across the entire state. MAPA is pleased to work with the Mayor, the Housing Task Force, and the City to bring additional housing to Blair," said MAPA Executive Director Greg Youell.

SEMCOG Local Governments Awarded \$14 million for Walking and Biking Projects, Planning Assistance

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments has awarded almost \$13 million in funding for transportation projects through their Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and over \$900,000 in funding for their Planning Assistance Program. Funding was allocated to 24 TAP projects and 26 Planning Assistance Program projects. TAP projects are aimed at improving pedestrian safety and connectivity, implementing transportation-related green infrastructure, and improving bicycle facilities to encourage greater use. SEMCOG's Planning Assistance Program provides funding across three categories: traffic safety, road asset management, and multi-community planning. These projects are seen as vehicles to implement strategies contained in regional plans and enable local governments to coordinate efforts on region-wide issues.

MEMBER REQUEST

NARC Requests Board and EDC Headshots

NARC is creating an online directory for the Board of Directors and Executive Directors Council (EDC), which will be available on NARC's new website launching later this year. We are asking

that each board member and EDC member send a headshot for their page. Please send photos and questions to Cameron Herbolsheimer at cameron@narc.org.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Principal Planner

Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, Meridian, ID

Executive Director

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, Santa Cruz, CA

Transportation Planner I – Sustainable Development

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Transportation Planner II – Sustainable Development

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Transportation Funding Specialist I

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Transportation Funding Specialist II

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Freight Planner I – Freight Planning

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Freight Planner II – Freight Planning

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Transportation Programs Manager

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, Albany, OR

Director of Transportation Planning and Data

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Allentown, PA

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program

Applications Due: July 23

The Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program supports efforts by state and local units of government and federally recognized Indian tribes to prevent and reduce school violence. Specifically, this Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) program will address: training school personnel and educating students to prevent student violence; development and operation of anonymous reporting systems concerning threats of school violence, including mobile telephone applications, hotlines, and websites; and development and operation of school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams that may include coordination with law enforcement agencies and school personnel. In addition, the program may fund specialized training for school officials in intervening and responding to individuals with mental health issues who may impact school safety.

STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Reporting Program

Applications Due: July 23

This solicitation specifically seeks applications that address the development and operation of school threat assessment and crisis intervention teams and the development of technology for local or regional anonymous reporting systems. This technology may be in the form of an app, hotline, or website. The proposed technology solutions may be those that could be used during an incident to assist in securing the safety of those involved, to include sharing information with first responders.

FY 2018 EDAP Program Funding

Applications Accepted on a Rolling Basis

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) today published **FY 2018 Economic Development Assistance Programs (EDAP) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications for construction, non-construction, planning, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under EDA's Public Works program and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) programs, which includes **Assistance to Coal Communities**. Grants and cooperative agreements made under these programs are designed to leverage existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities, including those negatively impacted by changes to the coal economy. Projects funded by these programs will support the *U.S. Department of Commerce Strategic Plan (2018-2022)* by, among other things: leading to the creation and retention of jobs and increased private investment, advancing innovation, enhancing the manufacturing capacities of regions, providing workforce development opportunities and growing ecosystems that attract foreign direct investment.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

SLLC Supreme Court Review

July 24, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

Between the internet sales tax case, partisan gerrymandering, the union dues case, the travel ban, and several First Amendment cases, this Supreme Court term will have implications for states and local governments for decades to come. Join NACo in a discussion of the most important cases of the term for states and local governments. NACo will be joined by Eric Citron, Goldstein & Russell, who briefed the internet sales tax case; Shay Dvoretzky, who argued a First Amendment retaliatory arrest case; and Lydia Wheeler, a legal and regulatory affairs reporter for *The Hill*.

The Future of Health Care: Where Does the Bipartisan Path Lead?

July 25, 10:00-11:30 AM ET

While Republicans and Democrats disagree on solutions to improve quality, lower costs, and increase access to care in our health care system, they do agree that changes are needed. The Bipartisan Policy Center's (BPC) Future of Health Care Initiative, a bipartisan group of leading experts in the field, will discuss the current state of polarization among policymakers, the prevailing views of each party's vision of a sustainable system, and will release a set of shared principles they believe can serve as a guide in identifying bipartisan solutions in health care reform. The event will also include the release of the results of a national survey conducted by BPC, which gauges what individuals prioritize in their health care. A live webcast will be available on the **event page**.

Automating the Federal Future

August 1, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

Federal agencies are expected to spend over \$14 billion on IT modernization in fiscal 2019 to improve productivity, reliability, and security. Across all aspects of modernization, automating manual processes is proven to increase reliability by reducing manual errors, decreasing time to deliver IT assets, and enhancing self-service capabilities for the enterprise. Join Bloomberg Government and Red Hat for a live webcast to explore how automation is accelerating the delivery of government services and enhancing security for cloud environments. Speakers will share lessons from leading IT practitioners in government and industry, including:

- The areas where automation can deliver the greatest return on investment.
- How to make a business case for modernization.
- The skills and tools needed to position your teams for success.
- How to measure success and communicate that to stakeholders.

Shortening the Length of Stay in Jail for People with Mental Illnesses

August 2, 2:00-3:15 PM ET

Part of NACo's Stepping Up framework encourages counties to focus their efforts on impacting one or more of "Four Key Measures" for people with mental illnesses: jail bookings, jail length of stay, connections to treatment, and recidivism. Join Stepping Up for the second webinar in the

Four Key Measures series, which will provide strategies for shortening the length of stay in jail for people with mental illnesses and describe key data points to collect and analyze to track this measure of success. Previous webinars in this series are available on the **Stepping Up toolkit**.

CONTACT US

Copyright © 2018 National Association of Regional Councils, All rights reserved.

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)