



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members,

I hope everyone enjoyed the July 4th holiday!

We are now just a month away from the joint Executive Director Training Conference that NARC and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) are hosting together in Austin, Texas. The next Executive Directors Council Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Training Conference on August 7. See our draft agenda and registration details on the website [HERE](#).

Finally, the Board of Directors Retreat will start with a dinner on August 11 at 6:00 PM, followed by the Board Meeting on August 12 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Members of the Board should register [HERE](#).

Looking forward to seeing you at these exciting events next month!

Thanks,
Joanna L. Turner

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

House & Senate resume session tomorrow.

This Week

Congress is back from its 4th of July break tomorrow, when the Senate and House will work on education legislation (**S 1177** and **HR 5** respectively). The House also plans to complete consideration of its Interior-Environment appropriations bill (**HR 2822**) this week, and address a bill (**HR 2647**) that modifies federal forest management practices.

Final “Waters of the United States” Rule Published

On Monday, June 29, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) published a **final rule** defining the scope of waters protected under the *Clean Water Act*. While the final rule does contain some language adjustments requested by a coalition of local government associations (including NARC) in a **letter** to the docket, our coalition believes that many of the changes are inadequate to address our concerns. For instance, although “ditches” are included as an exemption, they are also included as part of the definition of “tributary,” leaving local governments with uncertainty as to which ditches are jurisdictional under the rule. Similarly, stormwater and wastewater exemptions are also included, but only those on “dry land,” which is not defined in the rule.

Both chambers of Congress have taken legislative steps to overturn the rule. As reported in *eRegions* in May, the House voted (261-155) to approve *the Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015 (HR 1732)*, which requires EPA and the Corps to withdraw the rule and craft a new one. Then on June 10, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee **approved** the *Federal Water Quality Protection Act (S 1140)* by a vote of 11-9. S 1140 is virtually the same as HR 1732, but also includes additional instructions – which do not have the force of law – for EPA and the Corps to consider when crafting the new rule. Many of these **instructions** reflect the issues raised in NARC’s coalition letter. However, NARC has learned that Senate leadership wants to be sure that at least 60 senators support the measure (the magic number required to file **cloture**) before bringing S 1140 to the floor (or adding it to another vehicle). NARC members who have concerns with the Final Rule and support S 1140 are urged to contact their senators to voice their support. Please contact **Joanna Turner** if you want help crafting your message.

OTHER NEWS

Supreme Court: Reed v. Town of Gilbert

A dispute over temporary signage advertising a church’s location led to last month’s Supreme Court decision in Reed v. Town of Gilbert on the local regulation of signs and may impact your community. The Signage Foundation provided some **background information** on the case that might be helpful to communities and a **best practices guide**. In Reed v. Town of Gilbert, the court sided with the church and found that communities cannot regulate signs based on their content and that temporary directional signs are “no greater an eyesore” and pose no greater threat to public safety than ideological or political signs. The American Planning Association will hold a **webinar on July 30** with the authors of these resources. See details in the Events section.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

SEMCOG Commuter Challenge Results

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) led programs throughout the month of May to promote new and greener ways of commuting. The **Commuter Challenge** was a month-long program to motivate those who drive to work alone to try walking, biking, carpooling, or using public transportation as their mode of travel. SEMCOG recently announced the results of the Challenge: 500 participants logged more than 6,000 “green commute” trips for about 267,000 miles of alternative modes of transportation in the month of May. Southeast Michigan also competed with surrounding regions on Casual Commute Day on May 1. With nearly 1,000 participants, the region avoided emitting a total of 30,888 pounds of CO₂. Commuters were also encouraged to use greener modes of transportation by participating in **Bike to Work Day** on May 15. Through these programs, SEMCOG is helping raise awareness of greener commuting options.

MEMBER REQUESTS

Email responses to anna@narc.org

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?
5. 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!

Regional Research Analyst

Flint Hills Regional Council, Fort Riley, KS

Senior Socioeconomic Modeler

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

SBA Credit Administrator

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Quality Assurance Analyst

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Diversions and Enhanced Community Coordinator

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Principal Management Analyst

Atlanta Regional Commission, Atlanta, GA

Associate Modeler

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

FEMA Announces Funding Opportunity for FY2015 HSNTF/CTG Program

Application Deadline: August 10, 2015

FEMA released a Notice of Funding Opportunity for the FY2015 Homeland Security National Training Program (HSNTF) Continuing Training Grants (CTG) program, with a total \$11,521,000 available for awards in four focus areas. The HSNTF/CTG program develops and delivers innovative training programs that are national in scope and play an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System by supporting the building, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient nation. The FY2015 HSNTF/CTG program focuses on the following four training areas: Cybersecurity; Hazardous Materials; Countering Violent Extremism; and Rural Preparedness. Find details and application at www.grants.gov by selecting *Browse Agencies*, and then select *Department of Homeland Security*. In the *Basic Search Criteria*, in the *CFDA* box, enter 97.005; from there, select the *Continuing Training Grants Program Notice of Funding Opportunity*.

Funding Opportunity for FY2015 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants

Application Deadline: August 28, 3:00 PM ET

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 FY2015 Funding Announcements can be found at www.grants.gov. Eligible applicants must apply for funding through the Mitigation eGrants system on the FEMA Grants Portal accessible at <https://portal.fema.gov>.

HUD Announces National Disaster Resiliency Competition Finalists

Phase 2 Application Deadline: October 27

HUD announced 40 finalists in their National Disaster Resiliency Competition, which is designed to help states and local communities recover from past disasters while improving their resiliency to future extreme events through strategic community investments. In this second and final phase,

each finalist is invited to propose specific projects that advance their community's comprehensive resilience plans.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Reed v. Town of Gilbert: The Supreme Court's New Rules for Signs Webcast

July 30, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM ET

This webcast will discuss what local governments need to do to ensure that their sign codes comply with the U.S. Supreme Court's June 2015 decision in Reed v. Town of Gilbert. That decision established that any sign regulation that "on its face" requires a consideration of a sign's content to determine how that sign will be regulated is "content-based" and subject to "strict scrutiny." This session will provide guidance on: when and how to replace content-based sign regulations with effective content-neutral sign regulations and which content-based regulations should be retained and how to defend them if challenged.

NARC Conference! 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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