



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The Senate is in session, and the House will return tomorrow.

Appropriations Update

Congress has made considerable progress on the fiscal year 2019 appropriations process. Both chambers have passed all their appropriations bills out of committee. The deadline to pass identical appropriations packages and gain approval by the president is currently set for September 30. So far, the **House** and **Senate** have passed one minibuss package, approving the Energy and Water Development, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and the Legislative Branch. The bills do carry some differences that will need to be hammered out in a conference committee (**which has already been selected**), including:

- A provision to repeal the 2015 *Waters of the United States* (WOTUS) rule in the House package;
- A slightly higher amount in the Senate bill for Veterans Affairs to help address the opioid crisis; and
- More funding for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil works program in the Senate version.

EPA Administrator Pruitt is Gone but Five EPA Policy Battles Remain

Last week, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt officially resigned from his post. For now, Pruitt's Deputy Administrator Andrew Wheeler will serve as the acting EPA Administrator. Although Pruitt is gone, there are still five major regulatory battles that lie ahead for EPA:

- *Shrinking the **Clean Power Plan** (CPP)*: Administrator Pruitt formally began to undo the Obama-era CPP in October under direction of the president. The current CPP has sweeping rules to cut carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants. Under Mr. Pruitt, EPA drafted a much weaker alternative to CPP, requiring only modest tweaks to existing coal plants. The new draft is still subject to public comment and review before it can be finalized.
- *Fighting with California Over Vehicle Standards*: EPA has been working with the U.S. Department of Transportation to loosen Obama-era rules on greenhouse gas vehicle emissions. Their plan would halt any rise in fuel-economy standards in 2021 and rescind California's authority to set its own tougher standards for regulation, which the state has vowed to challenge in court.
- *Scaling Back the Clean Water Rule*: Last year, EPA began the process to roll back the Obama-era WOTUS rule. The administration seeks to write a new, narrower regulation that would extend protections to fewer waterways, which environmental groups have been challenging or threatening to challenge in the courts.
- *Changing the EPA's Use of Science*: In April, EPA **released a proposal** to limit the use of studies when underlying data is not publicly available. Scientific researchers criticized the move, saying the proposal could exclude some of the most important studies relating to the harms of air pollution or pesticides.

- *Finding a Compromise on Biofuels*: Mr. Pruitt exempted more than two dozen small oil refineries from a mandate to use renewable fuels like ethanol (made from corn). This move has gained the criticism of corn-state senators.

Local Communities to Receive Record \$552.8 Million in PILT

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke recently announced that over 1,900 local governments across the nation will receive \$552.8 million in Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funding for 2018. PILTs are federal payments to local governments to help offset losses in property taxes due to non-taxable federal lands within their boundaries. This is the highest amount ever allocated in the program's 40-year history. Secretary Zinke said, "these investments are one of the ways the federal government is fulfilling its role of being a good land manager and good neighbor to local communities... PILT investments often serve as critical support for local communities as they juggle planning and paying for basic services, such as public safety, fire-fighting, social services, and transportation."

Ensure Your City Is Eligible for Mobile Broadband Infrastructure Funding

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is launching Mobility Fund Phase II (MF-II), a new program that will invest \$4.53 billion over 10 years to bring 4G LTE wireless services to underserved communities, especially rural areas. Local representatives currently have the opportunity to challenge an initial determination of ineligibility for this program's support, ensuring that their designation for federal mobile broadband spending accurately reflects residential need. To learn more about this challenge process and view a map of initial determinations for eligible and ineligible areas, visit the [main program webpage](#). The MF-II Challenge Process portal is open through August 27.

OTHER NEWS

Rising Inequity and Local Solutions

Inequality in America has been climbing steadily since the Nixon administration. Here are some specific examples from the National Academy of Public Administration Social Equity Leadership Conference that showcase promising local and state solutions to tackle different facets of inequality:

- *Seeing Opportunity in Climate Change for Workforce Development*: Extreme weather events have been on the rise, but New York City Deputy Mayor J. Phillip Thompson has recognized that resiliency efforts will be a consistent generator of jobs over the next century. The city has teamed up with nonprofit organizations, community colleges, and unions to focus on creating a workforce that will improve the area's sustainability and ability to bounce back from major natural disasters.
- *Free College for the Middle Class*: New York and Tennessee have launched successful "last dollar" programs to send children of the middle class to college with tuition entirely subsidized by the state.
- *Measuring What You Care About*: The CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance (ISLG) has been directly working with local officials to create robust equity indices specific to their localities. Officials in Pittsburgh, PA; Tulsa, OK; St. Louis, MO; and Dallas, TX are using ISLC's Equality Indicators project to address both individual programs and the intersections of inequality across many areas.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

WFRC Recognized as Salt Lake Chamber's "Partner of the Year"

The Salt Lake City Chamber awarded the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) with its prestigious Partner of the Year award. This award is given to organizations that demonstrate leadership and partnership and work proactively with the Chamber to advance key business priorities. WFRC prides itself on working closely with the Chamber and other private sector organizations to promote good mobility, clean air, a strong economy, and a high-quality life for all residents. Congratulations, WFRC!

Success at AASHTO 2018 National Bridge Building Competition

The American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) hosts an annual National Bridge and Structure Competition for students participating in Transportation and Civil Engineering (TRAC) and Roadways into Developing Elementary Students (RIDES) – the

organization's outreach programs to introduce them to transportation and civil engineering career possibilities. The Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Florida Department of Transportation provided training and funding to teachers in Broward County to bring these outreach programs into the classroom. Thanks in part to Broward MPO's support, this year was the first time that the state of Florida has been represented in this competition at the national level. Congratulations!

REGIONS LEAD

Visit www.regionslead.org to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too. Please send contributions to cameron@narc.org.

State Perspectives on Regulating Background Ozone

By Sharath Rereddy

On June 21, the Environment Subcommittee of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee held a hearing on State Perspectives on Regulating Background Ozone. Among those called to testify was Diane Rath, executive director of the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) in San Antonio, Texas. She provided background on the great progress the San Antonio-New Braunfels Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has made over the years in reducing ozone and explained some of the complicated factors used to calculate the region's ozone levels.

2018 NARC Achievement Award Winners

By NARC

NARC Awards winners exemplify many qualities that a 21st-century regional council needs to be successful, including innovation, adaptability, collaboration, and hard work. Read our blog to learn more about the winning plans and programs.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Executive Director

Centralina Council of Governments, Charlotte, NC

Transportation Planner

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

Principal Planner

Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, Meridian, ID

Executive Director

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, Santa Cruz, CA

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

USDA's Rural Housing Preservation Grants

Applications Due: August 9

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing Service (RHS) is soliciting applications under its Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program. The HPG program provides qualified public agencies and nonprofit organizations grant funds to assist very low- and low-income homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their homes in rural areas. In addition, the HPG program assists rental property owners and cooperative housing complexes in repairing and rehabilitating their units if they agree to make such units available to low- and very low-income persons.

HUD's Continuum of Care Program

Applications Due: September 18

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is making \$2.1 billion available in fiscal year 2018 for the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. The program is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. It provides funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, states, and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals,

families, persons fleeing domestic violence, and youth while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness. It also strives to promote access and utilization of mainstream programs by the homeless, and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Disaster Preparedness for Community-Dwelling Older Adults with Dementia & Caregivers

July 10, 10:00-11:00 AM PT

This American Society on Aging (ASA) webinar provides a brief overview of risk factors that affect older adults' and family caregivers' preparation and response to a natural disaster. Characteristics of recent disasters in Northern and Southern California are summarized to highlight the vulnerabilities of older adults living in areas prone to wildfires and weather emergencies. The design, implementation, and evaluation of a pilot program conducted at the VA Palo Alto Healthcare System that targets disaster preparedness of community-dwelling veterans with dementia and their family caregivers are described. ASA will also discuss policy and planning implications of lessons learned in the pilot, as well as opportunities for promoting safety for community-dwelling older adults experiencing disasters.

Revitalizing Civics Education in American Schools

July 11, 12:00-1:00 PM ET

Millions of American students and adults continue to be unfamiliar with how their government works. State legislators, educators, and civic-minded organizations are working to reverse this trend with the hope of reinvigorating American civics. This National Conference of State Legislatures webinar will explore the general state of civics knowledge and education in the U.S. and highlight some of the work state legislators are undertaking to address civics education and engagement in their states.

Creative Placemaking: More than Murals

July 12, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

What is creative placemaking and how can it be a more interdisciplinary tool? What is its benefit to community members, community developers, and national organizations? Join Enterprise Community Partners to hear how they have spent the past year exploring the role of intermediaries in this conversation about creative placemaking and community development. The speakers will share their perspective on this evolving field as well as what challenges and inspires them in their work.

Open Source: Paving the Way for a Changing Workforce

July 24, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

A skills gap exists even among younger-generation IT workers. Agencies are scrambling to find personnel with expertise in cloud service management, cybersecurity, systems architecture, and legacy technologies. At the same time, many workers are preparing to retire and will leave behind a wealth of knowledge, while younger IT professionals struggle to gain the knowledge they need to take their agencies into the future. The good news is, open source technology offers an opportunity to meet today's workforce challenges while laying a foundation for ongoing modernization and innovation. Join *Government Technology* as they examine how open source is helping state and local agencies bridge knowledge and skills gaps and act as a recruiting magnet for the best and brightest workers.

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