

July 16, 2018 [View this email in your browser](#)



## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

*Correction: Last week, eRegions inaccurately stated that the House and Senate have both passed all their appropriations bills out of committee. The House just passed their Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill out of the full House Appropriations Committee last Wednesday. The House Homeland Security appropriations bill has yet to be introduced.*

### House Appropriations Committee Adopts Labor/H Appropriations Bill

Last Wednesday, the House Appropriations Committee adopted the **fiscal year (FY) 2019 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education (Labor/H) appropriations bill**. Adopted along party lines, the bill includes \$177.1 billion in funding – essentially the same as the FY 2018 enacted level. In the **official committee press release**, House Appropriations Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen stated, “This bill funds critical programs that will protect and save lives both now and in the future, and help prepare the next generation to be part of a productive workforce to grow our economy and provide for their families.”

Funding that is important to regions includes:

- \$2.2 billion for the Administration for Community Living (about \$400 million more than last year) for aging and disability services;
- \$3.6 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the same as last year;
- \$1.7 billion for the Social Services Block Grant, the same as last year; and
- \$3.5 billion for training and employment services (about \$12 million less than last year) for a wide range of activities, including:
  - \$846 million for adult employment and training;
  - \$903 million for youth employment and training;
  - \$1.2 billion for dislocated worker services; and
  - \$400 million for community service employment for older Americans.

With only 22 official work days in the House before the last day of FY 2018, it is unlikely that this bill will make it to the House floor as an independent bill. It is more likely to become part of a minibuss package, where a smaller package of appropriations bills is put forth to the floor for a vote. As time ticks away towards the September 30 deadline, it is possible that Congress could pass a continuing resolution to keep the government from shutting down and to give themselves more time to consider the twelve FY 2019 appropriations bills.

### House Expected to Take Up Second Minibus

The House is expected to move a second minibuss package forward this week, seeking a vote on a two-spending bill bundle. This minibuss would combine the \$35.3 billion Interior-Environment and the \$23.4 billion Financial Services-General Government appropriations bills into a **single bill**, both of which were individually passed out of the House Appropriations Committee on party lines. The House Rules Committee is taking up the minibuss tonight to consider which of the nearly 170 proposed amendments will be considered on the floor. Check out the House Appropriations Committee summaries on the **Interior-Environment** and **Financial Services-General**

**Government** bills for each bill's highlights.

### **Farm Bill Motion Teed Up for This Week**

The House could take an important step in moving the Farm Bill forward this week by voting on a motion to proceed to conference. However, the strained working relationship between House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (R-TX) and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN) signifies there is a lot to be worked out in Congress. Last week, Representatives Conaway and Peterson met for the first time in 2 months since clashing over the House bill's proposed changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Representative Peterson has already vowed to team up with his Senate counterparts during the conference – Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) – because they have taken a hard line against the House's suggested changes to SNAP.

### **5G Compromise Bill Still a Hit to Local Government**

The *STREAMLINE Small Cell Deployment Act (S. 3157)*, a bipartisan bill introduced last month, has been praised by the wireless industry trade association CTIA because it would help America win the 5G race against China to accelerating deployment of next-generation wireless infrastructure. Christopher Mitchell, Director of Community Broadband Networks for the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, is more concerned with rolling out 5G at a steady speed – one where carriers agree to a fair price for using public rights of way. He also argued that cities like Sacramento and San José in California have already reached agreements with carriers that would no longer be possible with the new bill and give the advantage to the latter in negotiations. The bill proposes the following:

- Impose time limits on local governments, including a 60-day deadline for acting on requests to collocate equipment and a 90-day deadline for acting on all carrier requests;
- Smaller municipalities (50,000 or less) would be allowed more time for decision-making;
- The FCC would have the power to issue one time, 30-day waivers to states and localities; and
- State and local governments will charge application processing fees based on “actual and direct costs” for maintenance and inspections.

### **569 House-Passed Bills Await Action in The Senate**

Of 768 bills which the House sent to the Senate this Congress, 569 have yet to pass the upper chamber. It seems unlikely that many of these bills will clear the Senate this year, and any bill which doesn't become law would have to be reintroduced in 2019, when the 116th Congress convenes. The backlog of bills has caused frustration among Republicans in both chambers.

### **2017 Hurricane After-Action Report: FEMA's Responses to Common News Reports**

FEMA has released responses to common news reports that have circulated regarding the adequacy of their efforts to alleviate multiple disasters during 2017. Their response to reports that they “admitted failure” was that after-action reports are standard procedure for the agency to continually improve their performance. They also responded to reports that FEMA ran out of supplies for Puerto Rico and that the agency did not provide adequate meals by saying a “full range of meal options” were provided, and that the agency moved more than \$2 billion in commodities across affected states and territories. They added, “while distribution of commodities proved challenging, the supplies did not run out.”

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **Concerns Growing that New Trade Tariffs Could Impact Municipal Bonds**

An article in *Bloomberg Government* expressed concern among municipal bond experts that the current increase in trade tariffs with China, Canada, Mexico, and the European Union could create significant credit problems for states and localities. As exports decline because of the increased tariffs, state and local governments are likely to experience revenue shortfalls, especially when compounded with tax reform and the reduction of the state and local tax deduction. These shortfalls could lead to credit agencies downgrading state and local credit scores. Those changes could have a significant impact on the cost of borrowing by localities through the issuance of municipal bonds, and therefore the ability of states and localities to fund important infrastructure projects like roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, and airports. The experts warn that agricultural states and states with heavy manufacturing are likely to experience the greatest impact.

## **Local Leaders' Priorities for Their Communities: Survey**

Together with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Route Fifty administered a survey to a mix of senior-level elected, appointed, and career public officials at the local level. They were asked to choose among competing priorities to get a better picture of what issues are the most vital to the future success of local communities. Overall, local leaders ranked taxation, finance, and budget as their highest priorities, followed by economic development and infrastructure/transportation. The lowest-ranked priorities from the bottom up were social services, public health, environment/resiliency, and diversity/inclusion and civic engagement. The survey also showed that the ranking of the priorities was impacted by population size, with major metros selecting infrastructure/transportation, middle metros selecting economic development, and rural areas selection taxation, finance, and budget as their top priorities.

## **REGION SPOTLIGHT**

### **Kentucky Association of District Directors Celebrates 50 Years of ADDs**

Fifty years ago, the state of Kentucky enabled legislation to create area development districts (ADDs). To celebrate this momentous milestone, the Kentucky Association of District Directors hosted a dinner to recognize all current and retired ADD directors last month. The duration of service for this group ranged from 50 years to just 14 days. Special recognition was giving to three retiring Kentucky ADD directors: Gail Wright of Gateway ADD, Wendell Lawrence of Lincoln Trail ADD, and Jack Couch of the Kentuckiana Regional Planning & Development Agency. Congratulations to all the Kentucky ADDs for their great work over the past 50 years and best wishes to the retiring directors!

## **REGIONS LEAD**

Visit [www.regionslead.org](http://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](mailto: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!***

### **Transportation Planning Specialist**

Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, Richland, WA

### **Executive Director**

Centralina Council of Governments, Charlotte, NC

### **Transportation Planner**

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

## **FUNDING**

***View full list of grants!***

### **FTA Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program**

Applications Due: August 6

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has announced the opportunity to apply for approximately \$366.3 million in fiscal year 2018 competitive grant funding for transit bus projects nationwide. The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment Program is authorized by Congress to improve the condition of bus infrastructure nationwide by funding the replacement and rehabilitation of buses and related facilities. Projects eligible for this funding opportunity include those that replace, rehabilitate, lease, or purchase buses and related equipment as well as projects to purchase, rehabilitate, construct, or lease bus-related facilities, such as buildings for bus storage and maintenance.

### **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.

### **Strategic Economic and Community Development**

Applications Due: September 30

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Rural Development Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) is a Farm Bill provision that allows USDA to give priority for projects that support the implementation of regional economic development plans through the following four USDA Rural Development programs: Community Facilities Loans, Grants, and Loan Guarantees; Water and Waste Disposal Program Loans, Grants, and Loan Guarantees; Business & Industry Program Loan Guarantees; and Rural Business Development Grants. To be eligible for SECD, a project must: be eligible for the underlying program; be carried out solely in a rural area; and support a multi-jurisdictional strategic economic community development plan. To apply for SECD priority points, applicants must submit **Form RD 1980-88** by the application deadline of the program(s) you are applying for or September 30, 2018, whichever comes first.

## **EVENTS**

***View full list of events!***

### **Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Equity Efforts in Local Government**

July 17, 1:30-2:30 PM ET

In this National Civic League webinar, learn how two local governments – Oakland, California, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – are approaching diversity, inclusion, and racial equity. Presenters Nolan Atkinson, Chief Diversity Officer in Philadelphia, and Darlene Flynn, Director of Oakland's Department of Race and Equity, will discuss how they tackle diversity, inclusion, and racial equity in local government, pioneering the work in their respective cities.

### **Statewide Strategies for Rural Digital Inclusion**

July 18, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

This BroadbandUSA webinar will focus on statewide strategies to promote broadband adoption and use in rural communities. Speakers will highlight the role of state governments, libraries, and university extension programs in planning and executing these strategies. The speakers will also discuss the role of broadband adoption in rural economic and workforce development, as well as approaches to facilitate broadband use and improve digital skills.

### **Midterm Countdown: What's Left on the Legislative To-Do List?**

July 18, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

There's little time left in the fiscal year and the 115th Congress and lawmakers are seeking to reach agreement on several pieces of legislation. Additionally, House and Senate leaders must balance that work with the election calendar as well as confirmation of President Trump's nominees, including a new Supreme Court justice. Join Bloomberg Government's legislative analysts as they walk through some of those key initiatives, including competing proposals to:

- Fund the government beyond September 30,
- Address the opioid crisis,
- Set policy for defense programs,
- Extend operations of the Federal Aviation Administration,
- Greenlight federal water projects,
- Reauthorize farm support and nutrition programs, and
- Expand the authority of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S.

### **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.

### **Opportunity Zones: Understanding the Potential of the New Community Development Tax Incentive**

July 26, 3:00-4:00 PM ET

Join this free Connecting Communities® webinar to learn about the new Opportunity Zones tax incentive, which aims to drive long-term equity capital to distressed communities by providing tax benefits on investments in Opportunity Funds. Speakers will provide details on how the tax incentive is expected to work and highlight emerging national and local strategies to engage residents around how these funds are deployed in their communities. Participation is free, but preregistration is required.

## **CONTACT US**

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