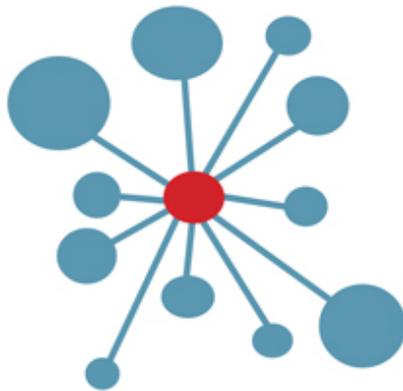




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



converge ■ learn ■ share

**2017 executive directors conference
october 22 - october 24
san antonio, tx**

save the date!

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Overview

One of the lessons of Washington politics is that you never try to predict what is going to happen even a day or two ahead, because inevitably you will be wrong. Last week we said that House Republican leaders were considering combining all 12 appropriations bills into a single omnibus appropriations bill. After offering that prediction we learned that nothing of the sort will happen.

Instead House Republican leaders have decided to combine four bills into what is called a “minibus.” The four appropriations bills that will be combined are Defense, Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, Energy and Water, and Legislative Branch bills.

Why this sudden turnabout? The same problems that made it impossible to pass a health care bill in the Senate – disagreement within the Republican caucus between moderates and conservatives on how to proceed – is dogging House Republican leadership.

Moderates are concerned that the current appropriations bills cut too much out of programs while conservatives are looking for more cuts. As a result, the only appropriations bills on which both sides can agree are defense, veterans’ affairs, energy and water, and the legislative branch.

The package that now will move to the floor – as soon as this week– will include \$658.1 billion for defense (a \$68 billion increase over last year and \$14 billion more than the president requested), \$88.8 billion for military construction and veterans’ benefits, \$37.56 billion for energy and water, and \$3.58 billion for the legislative branch.

What does this mean for funding for programs that are important to regional councils? It means that many of them – like job training, low-income home energy assistance, TIGER grants, and aging programs, to name just a few – will face significant pressures for even greater cuts than we have already seen.

Even if the House were to complete the appropriations process through a series of minibuses, the prospects of reaching an agreement with the Senate are unlikely. For one thing, the Senate has completed only three appropriations bills. Combine that with the Senate's distraction over the health care debate, and it is unlikely that they will finish much more before recess. Additionally, passing appropriations bills in the Senate requires a 60-vote majority, something that would not happen if the Senate even attempted to pass current versions of House appropriations bills. Democrats have made it clear that the cuts currently proposed by the House are unacceptable, and have demanded parity between defense and non-defense appropriations. For Senate Democrats to support any of the appropriations bills, there must be an agreement that overall funding for non-defense discretionary programs increase by \$68 billion, the same as the proposed defense increase.

So where does this take us? Back to where we started. We believe that no matter what the House does and no matter how the Senate tries to move forward, they won't be able to pass an appropriations package or agree on what the final appropriations should look like. To avoid a government shutdown, they will need to pass an omnibus appropriations bill or a continuing resolution that keeps the government funded at the same level for some or all of next year. Of course, predictions of this sort are always subject to change.

NARC is continuing to monitor and work through a variety of coalitions with our National Association of Counties (NACo) and National League of Cities (NLC) partners to ensure that programs important to cities, counties, and regions are adequately funded. While we face an uphill fight to get these programs funded, we have had some success. House appropriators, for example, reduced CDBG by only \$100 million and maintained funding for many social and human services programs that the president proposed for elimination.

To ensure that you have the latest information on the budget and appropriations, NARC will host a conference call on Wednesday, August 9 concerning where the budget and appropriations processes stand and what we can expect moving forward. Please join us for this important call – details will be available soon.

What to watch in Congress this week:

- Appropriations Markups:
 - Tomorrow, Senate Appropriations Transportation-HUD and Commerce-Justice-Science subcommittees will mark up their spending bills. It is expected that these bills and the Legislative Branch spending bill will be in front of the full Appropriations Committee on Thursday.
- Bills on House Floor:
 - Today, there is a package of veteran and VA-related bills that includes: \$2 billion in mandatory funding for the Veteran's Choice Program; expanded educational benefits for the G.I. Bill; VA child care assistance for veterans in a facility; and a bill where the VA must certify to Congress that a sufficient number of small veteran-owned businesses are receiving contracts through a government-wide purchasing program.
 - **H.R. 2333** would amend the *Small Business Investment Act* to increase the amount of leverage made available to small business investment companies to \$175 million.
 - **H.R. 2056** would increase the cap on Small Business Administration loans to nonprofit groups that provide microloans to small businesses to \$6 million.
 - **H.R. 2364** would increase the amount certain banks and savings institutions may invest in small business investment companies.
 - **H.R. 3178** would amend the *Social Security Act* to improve the delivery of home infusion therapy and dialysis and make it easier to receive Medicare reimbursements for orthotics and prosthetics.
- Committee Hearings:
 - Tuesday at 10:00am – the Senate Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety will examine developing and deploying advanced clean energy technologies.
 - Tuesday at 10:00am – the House Subcommittee on Environment will have a hearing on examining advancements in biofuels, balancing with federal investments, and market innovation.

- Wednesday at 9:30am – the Senate Committee on Aging will examine progress toward a cure for Type I Diabetes, focusing on research and the artificial pancreas.
- Wednesday at 10:00am – the House Subcommittee on Research and Technology will discuss STEM and computer science education to prepare the 21st century workforce.

House Reauthorizes DHS

For the first time since 2002, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been reauthorized by a chamber of Congress. The House passed **H.R. 2825** last Thursday, which will make some changes to the department if passed as it is by the Senate. The bill seeks to streamline and consolidate DHS agencies and reduce the number of Transportation Security Administration senior executives by 20% by 2019. It would provide more tools and resources for first responders and front-line defenders. Border security would be a top priority, and would allow DHS to request extra canine teams at the border and provide grants to law enforcement agencies to enhance border security. The bill would provide \$800 million a year (through 2022) for the **Urban Area Security Initiative**, a program that helps urban areas become more resilient to acts of terrorism. *The Hill* also **reported** an increase to annual training hours for officers and agents.

House Passes Package of Energy and Environmental Bills

Last week, the House passed a series of bills related to energy and the environment. The following bills will be sent to the Senate for consideration:

- **H.R. 2883** would eliminate presidential permit requirements for pipelines and electrical equipment crossing U.S. borders.
- **H.R. 2910** would expedite interagency reviews of natural gas pipeline projects.
- **H.R. 2786** would amend criteria in the *Federal Power Act* for a facility to qualify as a conduit hydropower facility.
- **H.R. 3050** would provide federal financial assistance to states to implement, review, and revise state energy security plans.
- **H.R. 806** would delay implementation of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) latest standards for ground-level ozone until 2025. The bill would also give legal cover to EPA as it considers amending current standards with levels that are more flexible for states and their economic development plans.

Trump Administration Reveals Plan to Roll Back More Environmental Regulations

Last Thursday, *The Hill* reported that Trump released a regulatory agenda promising more environmental regulation rollbacks. The administration has already **initiated the first step in rescinding the Waters of the U.S. Rule**, but the agenda reveals that a replacement proposal will not be available until December. EPA is also repealing the **Clean Power Plan**, which limits the carbon dioxide released by power plants. Other agenda items slated for eventual revision or repeal are the water pollution standards from power plants and methane pollution limits for landfills and oil and gas drilling. See EPA actions and proposed actions on regulations **HERE**. See *The Hill's* **article** for proposed reviews and repeals of regulations affecting the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Energy.

Sean Spicer Resigns as White House Press Secretary

After spending the last couple of months giving very few briefings on the president's activities, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer resigned on Friday. The action followed the appointment of Anthony Scaramucci, a New York financier, as the White House Communications Director. Spicer did not agree with Scaramucci's appointment and turned down the opportunity to stay on the communications team. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who has recently provided all of the White House's press briefings, will become the next press secretary.

Nominations Open for DOL Apprenticeship Expansion Task Force

The Secretary of Labor is calling for nominations for a new apprenticeship expansion task force. The task force will identify strategies and proposals to promote apprenticeships, especially in industries where apprenticeship programs are lacking, and submit a final report to the president for review. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for the panel, please submit a resume, cover letter, and contact information by August 8.

OTHER NEWS

Forum Today on Including Broadband in Trump's Infrastructure Plan

The Brookings Institution's Center for Technology Innovation hosted a forum today discussing the inclusion of broadband in Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure plan. There is clearly bipartisan support for broadband as a critical infrastructure asset that should be available in every community, with an emphasis on expanding coverage in rural areas and tribal lands. The forum discussed a variety of topics, including lessons learned by the *2009 National Recovery Act* and the Federal Communications Commission's successful spectrum incentive auctions. They talked about collaboration opportunities for the Trump administration's goals and the movement of smart cities and 5G wireless technologies. The panel ended their segment on how the infrastructure plan would promote a long-term vision for increasing broadband access in rural areas. You can follow the conversation on Twitter using [#USBroadband](#).

Infrastructure at a Crossroads: Where Do We Go from Here?

As *Route Fifty* discusses in their new eBook, *Infrastructure at a Crossroads: Where Do We Go from Here?*, infrastructure isn't just about roads and bridges. In this collection of *Route Fifty* infrastructure articles, the authors consider the whole network of U.S. infrastructure, including water systems, passenger rail lines, and digital broadband. They discuss how local governments are looking to maintain, fix, and upgrade old infrastructure. The authors also touch on a topic that is sure to be on every local government planner's mind: how to find funding for these pricey projects.

NLC Explores the Future of Work in Cities

The rapid advancement of technology and automation in the workforce has some worried about losing their jobs to machines. NLC says that this shift yields vast opportunities, too. In their new report, *The Future of Work in Cities*, NLC describes how changes in digital technologies will affect the workforce within the next 20 years. While city leaders should embrace the increases in productivity and economic output that result from automation, they need to proactively prepare for the future. The report recommends that city leaders focus on workforce development efforts, portable benefits, family-friendly workforce policies, basic income and other far-reaching social benefit shifts, and other innovative policy approaches to create an economy that works for everyone.

Service Workforce Seeing Much Needed Raises in Salaries

Stateline reports that many states are now seeing a rise in salaries for those in lower income brackets. Restaurant workers, home health aides, hair dressers, bartenders, bus drivers, and construction workers are some of the professions that have seen wage increases in states across the country. Reasons for this increase vary. Economic reasons include minimum wage increases and the declining unemployment rate, although the economic inequality gap continues to widen. Other reasons include shortages of service workers in high-cost areas and the increased demand for home aids for the aging baby boomer population.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Mapping Tool Helps Chattanooga Explore City Data

Chattanooga, TN – one of the country's leaders in civic technology – is now leading the way to open data. *Route Fifty* highlights their new tool, **City Insider**, an open data portal that local officials, stakeholders, and the public can use to learn more about their community. Users will be able to see trends in police incidents and 311 reports. This interactive map will also show where these incidents are taking place. New datasets will soon be available too.

REGIONS LEAD

Visit www.regionslead.org to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too.

Guest Blog: Implications of Southeast Michigan's 2045 Forecast

by Dr. Xuan Liu, Research Manager, SEMCOG

Demographic and socio-economic trends discussed in the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' (SEMCOG) 2045 Regional Forecast will necessitate some lifestyle changes in the greater Detroit, Michigan region. The biggest of these trends is the aging of the population and the lack of incoming young people. These trends will create a labor shortage that can impact a regional economy.

To Sell or Not to Sell? Small Local Governments Look at Privatizing their Public Water Systems

by Maci Hurley

The Washington Post highlighted that the idea of water privatization has left small and mid-size communities, many of which are already struggling with budget deficits, with a tough choice. Should these local governments continue to manage and maintain their own public water systems? Or is selling their water system to a private corporation a more reasonable option?

MEMBER REQUESTS

Financial Managements Systems

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) is assessing their financial management system, and would benefit from knowing how other NARC members structure their financial management. What financial software package does your regional council use? GPCOG would like to talk to some great Finance Directors to understand what they do and how they do it. If you have the answers to these questions or want to have a conversation with GPCOG directly, please send your responses and/or contact information to anna@narc.org.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Senior Planner: Pedestrian – Bicycle Coordinator

Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization, West Palm Beach, FL

Executive Director

Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Dover, DE

Transportation Planner

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Kelso, WA

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Administration of Children and Families Seeking Assistance with Refugee Center Pathways Program

Applications Due: August 29

The Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Administration of Children and Families is inviting public and nonprofit agencies to submit applications for the Refugee Center Pathways Program. Up to \$250,000 will be provided to assist refugees to qualify for licenses and certifications necessary to attain employment. This can be in the form of case management, training and technical assistance, English language training, mentoring, and providing participants with financial assistance for costs associated to the establishment or re-establishment of credentials. Collaboration with professional associations, universities, and experts in this area is highly encouraged.

Help Homelessness with this HUD Continuum of Care Grant

Applications Due: September 28

The Continuum of Care Program is dedicated to ending homelessness and re-housing the homeless as soon as possible. Local governments and instrumentalities of local governments are encouraged to apply for funding for programs that quickly re-house individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness. Ideal programs will also promote use of mainstream homelessness programs, and optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness.

EDA Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program

Applications Accepted on a Rolling Basis

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is looking for applications that assist with the development of economic development plans and studies designed to build capacity and guide economic prosperity and resiliency in regions. The Planning Program helps with short-term state planning investments for the creation and retention of high-quality jobs. The Local Technical

Assistance Program strengthens the capacity of local governments to undertake and promote effective economic development programs through feasibility studies and impact analyses.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

Solar Energy Industries Association: Community Solar Low Income Energy Projects

July 25, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

Community solar offers a great opportunity for communities to share the benefits of solar power, especially if they can't purchase panels on their own. This joint webinar between the Solar Energy Industries Association and Vote Solar will tell the stories of two successful community solar projects for low-income communities. Broader themes will touch on how we can expand accessibility to all socioeconomic groups.

NARC Webinar! Cyber Security for Public Agencies: Top Mistakes to Avoid

August 1, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Public sector agencies are becoming increasingly focused on the need to secure government information networks and data. Today's public officials must be aware of threats such as ransomware, cyber extortion, hacktivism, attacks on critical infrastructure, cyber risk, breaches, and operational failure. Join this NARC and Public Technology Institute webinar to learn about the importance of cyber security for regions. The webinar will explore the current cyber security environment and provide insight on:

- Why public agencies are targets
- Who and what is behind the attacks
- The need to promote awareness within the public sector
- Resources that are available
- Tips to make you "cyber safe"

Government Technology's A Tale of Two Cities: How Municipalities are Using Mobility to Increase Safety

August 1, 2:00-3:00PM ET

Government Technology is hosting a webinar that will showcase how two cities are using technology to keep their communities safe. IT leaders from Lexington, NC and Montebello, CA will discuss the mobile solutions that are modernizing their public safety infrastructures, how their solutions are helping them save money while increasing security, and best practices for streamlining implementation of public safety digital tools.

American Public Health Association: Climate Change Planning Tools

August 2, 10:00-11:30 PT

State and local climate leaders will present on the most up-to-date climate change planning tools, and provide case studies and advice on how to use and develop resources to implement climate adaptation and resiliency.

CONTACT US

Copyright © 2017 National Association of Regional Councils, All rights reserved.

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