



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

House & Senate resume session on Tuesday.

This Week

Congress will spend the week trying to reach an agreement on the transportation authorization bill before the program expires and lawmakers leave for August recess. The debate over transportation funding is complicated by the Senate move to tie controversial reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank to the legislation. The House adopted a short term bill funding surface transportation programs through mid-December, avoiding the July 31 funding deadline.

Beyond the August recess, Congress will only have a month to fund government programs before the fiscal year ends on September 30. Last week, House Speaker John Boehner conceded that Congress will not be able to finish the 12 regular spending bills in time and will pass a short term measure to avoid shutting down the government. Appropriations committees in both the House and Senate have approved all 12 appropriations bills, and the House has passed six of them. Republican leaders do not want to face a potential government shutdown as the 2016 elections are heating up.

Senate Votes to Move to Debate on Highway Bill

The Senate is currently debating a multi-year transportation authorization bill. Final vote on the package is expected on Wednesday or Thursday. While the bill is largely positive and contains much of what NARC and other local government groups requested, it is not a perfect bill. The bill currently calls for a *decrease* in STP funding distributed to local areas. Senators Wicker and Booker filed an amendment (**#2289**) to both increase the overall funding for STP *and* increase the share of STP distributed by population. These changes would provide local areas an additional \$1 billion in STP in the legislation's first year when compared to the existing base bill. It is vital that this amendment be accepted. **NARC requests that you reach out to YOUR SENATORS and tell them you support this amendment.** A list of transportation staff is [HERE](#), complete with emails and phone numbers. We've also prepared a sample letter on this issue [HERE](#), which you can modify as you'd like to make it specific to your region. To see the impact of the amendment on metropolitan areas over 200,000 in population, a chart prepared by NARC is [HERE](#).

S. 192: Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2015

NARC and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) called on the House to take action on S. 192, the Older Americans Reauthorization Act of 2015, in this joint [letter](#). The Senate passed S 192 on July 16 and the legislation will now go to to the House for action. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the bill from the Congressional Research Service. Congress first passed the *Older Americans Act* in 1965 to provide grants for community planning and social services, research and development projects, and personnel training in the field of aging. Today OAA is the major source of social and nutrition services for older Americans. The network of programs includes 629 area agencies on aging. The last reauthorization was in 2006.

OTHER NEWS

The Brownfields Program Helps Revitalize American Communities

On July 22, the House Subcommittee on Water Resource and Environment held a hearing on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program. The *Brownfields Revitalization and Environment Restoration Act of 2001* authorized funding through the EPA for brownfield assessment and cleanup grants, provided liability protections, and increased support for state and tribal voluntary cleanup programs. The purpose of the hearing was to get testimony from organizations participating in the program as the subcommittee begins crafting a new reauthorization. Though the authorization expired in 2006, the program has continued to receive funds from Congress. Witnesses at the hearing hailed the success of the program, and proposed **revisions** to make the program more effective. Click [HERE](#) for NARC's summary of the hearing.

The Decoder: A Resource for Building Code Officials

The Decoder is a quarterly newsletter delivering information on energy code enforcement and compliance to building officials, plan examiners, and inspectors. Produced by the **Institute for Market Transformation** and the **Building Code Assistance Project**, the Decoder seeks to improve energy code compliance through a well-informed enforcement community. Topic areas include: explanations and technical opinions on energy code provisions, sharing of best practices, new and helpful resources, and current issues related to enforcement and compliance.

CDC Releases New Built Environment Assessment Tool

The Centers of Disease Control (CDC) designed a new Built Environment Assessment Tool (BE Tool) to alleviate some of the challenges posed by the significant number of narrowly focused tools aimed at only one activity, one subpopulation, or one public health area. It was created as a collaborative enterprise across multiple areas of public health, and is a direct systematic observation data collection instrument for measuring the core features and quality of the built environment related to behaviors that affect health, like walking, biking, and other types of physical activity. The core features assessed in the BE Tool include: built environment infrastructure, walkability, bikeability, recreational sites and structures, and the food environment.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

NJTPA Receives Air Quality and Transportation Funding

This month, New Jersey Transportation Planning Association's (NJTPA) Board approved **\$10 million** in funding for multiple projects that will improve air quality throughout the region while also improving their regional transportation system. Some of the approved projects include a Truck Replacement Program, a Fleet Modernizing and Replacement Program, and a traffic signal replacement program that will adapt to traffic in real time. These programs were developed in collaboration with partner agencies through NJTPA's Transportation Clean Air Measure Program to help reduce harmful emissions and benefit the region's air quality.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Public Participation Planner – Research Analyst II

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

Principal Transportation Planner – Freight Planning

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Transportation Planner – System Performance Safety and Security

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, OK

Transportation Planner – Short Range Planning and Intermodal

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, OK

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

New National Municipal Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Awards Program

Applications Due: August 19

The National Municipal Stormwater and Green Infrastructure Awards program, led by the Water Environment Federation (WEF) through a cooperative agreement with EPA, has been established to recognize high-performing regulated Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer Programs (MS4s). The objective of the program is to inspire MS4 program leaders to seek new and innovative ways to meet and exceed regulatory requirements in a manner that is both technically effective as well as financially efficient. Recognition of innovative approaches is also a highlight of this program.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

FEMA's New Public Assistance Policy on Insurance Webinar

August 4, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET

August 11, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET

On June 29, FEMA posted to the **Federal Register** a new **Public Assistance Policy on Insurance**. The policy, which took effect upon posting, clarifies a number of factors: the types and extent of insurance applicants are required to obtain and maintain, how applicants can comply with their insurance requirements, and the reductions that will be made to applicants' public assistance funding based insurance coverage and requirements. *It is highly recommended that you turn up the volume on your computer speakers to listen to his webinar through your computer. Be sure to **test your Adobe Connect** before tuning in.*

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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