

August 24, 2015

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is not in session. House and Senate will return on September 8.

Overview

When lawmakers return from their August recess, they will face a looming deadline for action on the federal budget, which expires on September 30. Senate Democrats called on their Republican colleagues to begin negotiations over the summer in order to reach an agreement on the automatic spending caps known as sequestration before the September 30 deadline (see story below). President Obama has suggested he would veto any spending measure that applies the caps on domestic programs. Tomorrow, the Congressional Budget Office will release its annual *Budget and Economic Outlook* report with 10-year budget projections.

OMB Report Shows 2016 Spending Bills Would Exceed Caps

Last Thursday, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released its ***Sequestration Update Report*** for Fiscal Year 2016. Required by the *Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985*, the report shows that the House and Senate FY 2016 defense appropriations proposals, and the House's non-defense appropriations proposal, would exceed the caps set by the Budget Control Act. If the 2016 discretionary caps remain unchanged, the House non-defense bills are \$1.8 billion over the cap. If enacted in their current form, the House defense bill exceeds the cap by \$3 million, and the Senate's defense bill exceeds the cap by \$1 million.

EPA Proposes Rule to Reduce Methane Emissions from Oil, Natural Gas Industry

Last Tuesday, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a **proposed rule** that aims to reduce methane emissions from the oil and natural gas industry. The rule would require the oil and gas industry to identify and stop leaks in the production process, capture natural gas from the completion of hydraulically fractured oil wells, and limit emissions from certain natural gas transmission compressor station equipment. EPA says that the rule will result in cleaner and more efficient natural gas use and production, which will help states and industry comply with the Clean Power Plan rule. The rule will be available for comment 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register*. Once comments are received, EPA expects to issue a final rule is expected in 2016. Details on public hearings will be announced by EPA soon. Click **HERE** for more information on all of EPA's Oil and Gas Pollution Standards.

White House Announces Funding for Drug Trafficking, Heroin Response Strategy

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy announced \$13.4 million in available funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program, including \$5 million to reduce the trafficking, distribution, and use of heroin, plus \$2.5 million to support the Heroin Response Strategy, a partnership among five regional HIDTA programs: Appalachia, New England, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia/Camden, and Washington/Baltimore. The strategy will include a heroin and prescription opioid training curriculum to prepare law enforcement to

respond to the trafficking of heroin, to increase awareness of opioid addiction, and develop links to prevention and treatment resources.

White House Announces Actions to Boost Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

President Obama unveiled a number of executive actions on Monday designed to increase investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The orders were created to assist states working to meet new carbon emissions targets under the President's *Clean Power Plan* and bolster a number of other clean energy goals set by the Administration. The actions include a \$1 billion increase to a loan guarantee program for distributed energy projects, \$24 million in financing for several projects aimed at doubling the efficiency of solar panels, and the establishment of a U.S. Department of Defense initiative to install solar energy systems on 40 military bases. Additionally, the White House announced that it will spend \$220 million on energy programs for veterans and low income customers as well as form a task force to focus on boosting energy efficiency in low income households.

OTHER NEWS

Surging Seas Risk Finder

Climate Central has released a new tool for sea level and flood risk analysis for 21 coastal states. The Risk Finder is a multi-part public web tool that helps communities, planners, and leaders conduct a screening-level analysis of sea level rise and coastal flood risks, using detailed searchable maps; analysis of over 100 variables for 1000s of communities; community comparisons; and local sea level and flood risk projections.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Want your organization featured here? Send details to anna@narc.org.

Lots of New Leaders Among NARC Member Organizations

Over the last year or so, many of NARC's members have gone through big leadership changes. Please welcome our new executive directors:

Alamo Area Council of Governments – TX - Diane Rath
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning - IL - Joe Szabo
Florida MPO Advisory Council - FL - Carl Mikyska
New York Metropolitan Transportation Council - NY - Lisa Daglian
Pinellas County MPO and Planning Council - FL - Whit Blanton
Sun Corridor MPO - AZ - Sharon Mitchell
Stanislaus Council of Governments - CA - Rosa De León Park
Triangle J Council of Governments - NC - Lee Worsley
Yakima Valley Conference of Governments - WA - Larry Mattson

MEMBER REQUESTS

Email responses to anna@narc.org

Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization

Does your MPO/COG contract out transit service using Section 5307 funds from the Federal Transit Administration? And how much of your service is contracted out? If your MPO/COG does contract out the service, how do you handle matching requirements (e.g. does the contracted transit company provide the matching funds? Does the contractor partner with others to pay for the matching funds)?

Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Has your Metropolitan Planning Organization set up a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other form of agreement with a neighboring MPO to provide common services? Is your MPO working with nearby MPOs on common activities? What types of activities and services are you working on together?

CDBG-funded Project to Share

NARC is working with the CDBG Coalition to highlight the value of the program to individual communities for lawmakers. If you have a best practice example to share, please send a brief description to anna@narc.org by August 31.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Program Manager – Area Agency on Aging Division

Capital Area Council of Governments, Austin, TX

Procurement Coordinator

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Human Resources / Legal Department Administrative Assistant

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Office and Communications Specialist

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments, Yakima, WA

Natural Resources Transportation Specialist Part Time

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (BDSAP) Consultant

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Local Foods, Local Places

Applications Due: September 15

Local Foods, Local Places will provide direct technical support to selected communities. A team of experts will help community members develop action plans that use local foods to support healthy families and communities and to drive downtown and neighborhood revitalization. The assistance process features a community workshop that brings people together to develop shared goals and steps to achieve them.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Cato Policy Forum on Race, Housing, and Education Webcast

September 2, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM ET

The Cato Institute will host a policy forum on race, housing, and education. Panelists will discuss racial segregation in schools and in housing, and the need for better integration. The session will include panelists from the Economic Policy Institute, North Carolina State University, and the Cato Institute. The forum is available online at www.cato.org/live.

Coal-Reliant Communities Innovation Challenge Workshop

Workshop Applications Due: September 23, 5:00 PM ET – Charleston, WV

The National Association of Counties and the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation, with support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, are pleased to announce **the third and final workshop** being hosted in 2015 to support counties and regions impacted by the contraction of the coal industry. The goal of each workshop is to help boost the innovative potential of coal-reliant counties and regions seeking to grow and diversify their economies.

CONTACT US

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