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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

VOL. XIV, No. 36, September 22, 2014

# eRegions

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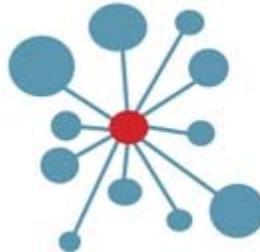
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### **PROGRAM UPDATE** **POLICY UPDATE**

#### **REGIONS 360**

### **GRANT OPPORTUNITIES** **UPCOMING EVENTS**



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executive directors' conference  
september 21 - september 24, 2014  
des moines, ia

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## **EXECUTIVE**BRIEF

Dear Colleagues,

Both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives have now recessed until after the mid-term elections, but they did manage to accomplish a few things before their adjournment.

On Thursday, September 18, the Senate approved a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the federal government through December 11 - legislation that was approved by the House the day before Senate passage. In addition to keeping the federal government open, the CR also includes a temporary extension of a moratorium on taxing Internet access, a renewal of the Export-Import Bank through June 30, 2015 and

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funding to train and equip Syrian rebel groups to assist their Islamic State terrorism resistance efforts. This authority also expires on December 11.

Also last week, the House passed two messaging bills for stimulating job growth and boost energy production. The *Jobs for America Act*, a \$572 billion jobs package, makes permanent the Research and Development tax credit, increases depreciation limits, and repeals the medical device tax and insurance requirements for employers under the *Affordable Care Act*. The second bill, the *American Energy Solutions for Lower Costs and More American Jobs Act*, allows construction of the Keystone Pipeline, accelerates LNG exports, and increases offshore oil production. The White House has already issued a veto threat on the legislation.

We will keep you posted on new developments when lawmakers return in the lame duck! In the meantime, watch our webpage and social media for updates from the Executive Directors' Conference, which is going on now in Des Moines.

Thanks,  
Joanna

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## PROGRAMUPDATE

### **EPA Extends Comment Period on Clean Power Plan Proposed**

**Rule:** Last week, EPA's Acting Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation Janet McCabe announced that the EPA is extending the comment period on the *Clean Power Plan* proposed rule by 45 days, to December 1. Click **HERE** for more information on the *Clean Power Plan* proposal.

**DOL FLSA Home Care Final Rule Toolkit:** A toolkit is available to help states and other program managers comply with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) *Fair Labor Standards Act* (FLSA) Home Care Final Rule that will take effect January 1, 2015. Resources include webinars, toolkits, and flowcharts. More resources will be added as they are developed. Click **HERE** for details.

**DOE's State, Local and Tribal Technical Assistance Gateway:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has launched a new page on its website to improve access to the broad range of technical tools and

resources that support and advance energy work led by states, tribes and local governments. Click [HERE](#) to go to the site.

**New Report Shows America's Schools Saving Money By Going Solar: [The Brighter Future: A Study on Solar in U.S. Schools](#),**

created by the Solar Foundation, is the first nationwide assessment of how solar energy helps to power schools in communities across America. The report shows that thousands of schools are already cutting their utility bills by choosing solar, using the savings to pay for teacher salaries and textbooks.

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## **POLICYUPDATE**

*Congress is in session.*

**House T&I Panel Releases Report on P3s:** House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee's special panel on Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) released its **final report** last Wednesday, recommending several steps to increase the use of P3s. The Committee's Vice Chairman, Rep. John J. Duncan, Jr. (R-TN), led the P3 Panel, and Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA) served as its Ranking Member. The final report makes recommendations to grow public sector capacity to improve agreements and ensure the needs of the public sector are adequately protected. It also proposes improvements to traditional procurement processes to ensure better outcomes for all projects. The report includes a series of recommendations for eliminating barriers to P3s, and changes to federal programs to encourage P3s. The report also recommends steps to ensure transparency and accountability for P3s. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will use the Panel's recommendations as a resource when considering future legislation. Click [HERE](#) for the report.

**House T&I Committee Approves Passenger Rail Reform**

**Legislation:** Last Wednesday, the House T&I Committee approved the [Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act](#) (PRRIA), H.R. 5449, by voice vote. The legislation reauthorizes Amtrak programs for four years. The proposal replaces Amtrak's current budget structure, and creates a new two-pronged budget structure with a Northeast Corridor capital and operating account and a separate National Network account (for all projects not on the NEC). There is no similar legislation in the Senate and the House is unlikely to take further action on this bill in a lame duck session, thus punting the issue until the next Congress. Click [HERE](#) for

details.

#### **Final Rule Issued on Surface Transportation Project Delivery**

**Program Application Requirements:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued a final rule last Tuesday that amends the application requirements for the *Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program*. This rulemaking is prompted by the enactment of the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act* (MAP-21), which converted the *Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program* into a permanent program, allowed any state to apply for the Program, created a renewal process for Program participation, and expanded the scope of the Secretary's responsibilities that may be assigned and assumed under the Program to environmental review responsibilities for railroad, public transportation, and multimodal projects, in addition to highway projects. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

#### **More Than Two-Thirds of Americans Support Increased Federal Investment in Public Transportation:**

Last Monday, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) released a new survey, conducted by the Mineta Transportation Institute, that found 68 percent of Americans support increasing federal public transportation investment. APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy stated that "Congress should move swiftly on a robust long-term funding plan for the next surface transportation bill" and that "Americans understand the importance of investing in public transportation because it is a catalyst to transforming their community." Click [HERE](#) for more information.

#### **STB Chairman Dan Elliott Pens Letter to Senate Committee**

**Regarding Freight Railroads:** Surface Transportation Board (STB) Chairman Dan Elliott recently sent a letter to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee informing Senators that the STB may soon take new action on shipment problems. Chairman Elliott stated that "although it has long been Board policy to favor private sector resolutions when possible, further regulatory action may be warranted for expediting the overall recovery or alleviating particularly intractable service failures." Click [HERE](#) for the letter.

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**REGIONS360**

**Cap-and-Trade Program to Provide SoCal with \$2 Billion for**

**Projects:** Southern California could receive \$2 billion for transportation projects from the state's cap-and-trade program, which may be used for building more pay lanes or funding the county's growing bus and rail system. Hasan Ikhata, executive director of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) remarked that "this is huge," and that "this is the only new source of transportation funding we have." Click [HERE](#) for details.

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants still open!

### **U.S. Department of Commerce Announces \$15 Million Grant Competition to Spur Regional Innovation**

*Application Deadline: November 3*

The 2014 Regional Innovation Strategies Program competition is designed to spur innovation capacity-building activities in regions across the nation. This year's program includes \$15 million in funding for the following programs:

- i6 Challenge (\$8M): The challenge is a national competition based on the most impactful national models for startup creation, innovation, and commercialization.
- Science and Research Park Development (\$5M): The grant program provides funding for feasibility and planning for the construction of new or expanded science or research parks, or the renovation of existing facilities.
- Cluster Grants for Seed Capital Funds (\$2M): These cluster grants provide funding for technical assistance to support feasibility, planning, formation, or launch of cluster-based seed capital funds that are offered to innovation-based, growth-oriented start-up companies in exchange for equity.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

### **PROMISE ZONE COMPETITION**

*Application Deadline: November 21, 5:00 PM ET*

The Obama Administration invites a new round of eligible applicants to apply for a Promise Zone designation. All communities can apply that meet the eligibility criteria, and demonstrate high need, a strong local commitment and a compelling strategy. HUD intends to designate six urban communities and USDA intends to designate at least one rural

and at least one tribal community. Submit completed applications via [www.Max.Gov](http://www.Max.Gov). Click [HERE](#) for the urban, rural and tribal application guides and *Frequently Asked Questions*. See webinar listed below for more details.

### **EPA Announces Grant Opportunities to Reduce Diesel Emissions at Ports**

*Proposals Due: December 11*

Today, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announced the availability of up to \$5 million in grant funding to establish clean diesel projects aimed at reducing emissions from marine and inland water ports located in areas of poor air quality. The list of eligible areas can be found [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) for more information and to access the Request for Proposals and other documents.

### **HUD \$1 Billion National Disaster Resilience Competition**

*Application Deadline: March 2015*

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently launched a National Disaster Resilience Competition, which makes \$1 billion available to communities that have been struck by natural disasters in recent years. The competition promotes risk assessment and planning, and will fund the implementation of innovative resilience projects to better prepare communities for future storms and other extreme events. Representatives from eligible communities will have the opportunity to attend Rockefeller-supported Resilience Academies across the country to strengthen their funding proposals. Click [HERE](#) to apply.

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## **UPCOMINGEVENTS**

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of events still open!

### **WEBINAR: DOE - Successful Project Financing Mechanisms**

*September 24, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM ET*

Attendees will learn about two popular mechanisms developed for federal agencies to finance renewable energy and energy efficiency projects: energy savings performance contracts (ESPCs) and utility energy services contracts (UESCs). The discussion includes how these two methods allow Tribes to develop the projects with limited to no upfront capital costs, thus minimizing the need for including the project costs in budgets or requesting Congressional appropriations for them. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**WEBINAR: Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Webcasts**

*TRIBAL - September 29, 1:00-2:00 PM ET. RSVP [HERE](#) to receive link.*

*RURAL - September 29, 2014, 3:00-4:00 PM ET. RSVP [HERE](#) to receive link.*

*URBAN - October 1, 3:00-4:00 PM ET. RSVP [HERE](#) to receive link.*

RSVPs are MANDATORY for each webcast and they are due by 5:00pm, Wed September 24. On Friday, September 26, 2014, links to the webcasts will be sent out to those who RSVP'd. There will be 3 webcasts geared to various audiences: 1) Tribal; 2) Urban and 3) Rural. Each webcast will provide a general overview in addition to the tailored presentation. See Promise Zone competition in Grants section for more details.

**EVENT: Síclovía**

*September 28, 10:00 AM – San Antonio, TX*

Síclovía is a free event that turns major city streets in to a safe place for people to exercise and play. The streets become temporarily car-free for about 5 hours on Sundays for families to run, ride bikes, take exercise classes and enjoy their city streets. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

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