

September 28, 2015

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

### Overview

House Speaker John A. Boehner made huge news last Friday when he announced that he would resign from his position as Speaker of the House and from Congress at the end of October. Republican lawmakers seeking to replace him are now scrambling to gather votes for upcoming leadership elections.

Against this backdrop, lawmakers still need to pass a continuing resolution (CR) by the end of Wednesday to avert a government shutdown. The Senate is set to vote to cut off debate this evening on an amendment containing the “clean” CR, which contains no riders on funding Planned Parenthood. On the House side, it appears that the Speaker will move to pass the Senate’s bill (the expected legislative vehicle is HR 719) once it passes. This seems to indicate that a shutdown, which was much more likely before Boehner’s announcement, is perhaps a more distant possibility now. Still, federal agencies are announcing their plans should a lapse in funding occur. Several agencies posted their contingency plans to their websites; the White House has a list [HERE](#).

In other must-pass legislation news, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster introduced last Friday a six-month extension of Federal Aviation Administration authorization (HR 3614, the *Airport and Airway Extension Act*). NARC expects the extension to come up for a vote in the House sometime tonight or tomorrow.

### NARC, USCM, NACO and NLC Send CSO Letter to Appropriators

This morning, NARC, along with its local government partners, sent a letter to House and Senate Appropriations leadership expressing concern over provisions in the Senate’s proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 *Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill* that, if enacted, would have costly consequences for communities and water utility ratepayers throughout the Great Lakes region. The organizations expressed concern over the national implications and precedent-setting nature of the proposed language, and asked lawmakers to strip the provisions from any final appropriations package that Congress enacts. The language, Section 428 of the bill, contradicts and undermines existing *Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Policy* by requiring communities to revise their long-term control plans to achieve a near-impossible goal of zero overflows—at an estimated additional cost of tens of billions of dollars to communities and ratepayers.

### Administration Expedites Infrastructure Permitting Processes

Last week, the Obama Administration **announced** new **guidance** aimed at expediting the federal environmental review and permitting process and expanding the use of **the Federal Infrastructure Permitting Dashboard**. Under the guidance, 11 federal agencies will be

required to coordinate schedules with other reviewing agencies for projects on the dashboard starting in October. The dashboard will serve as a tool for tracking targets and milestones for applications, permits, and reviews for these projects. The Administration also released an update to the *Synchronizing Environmental Reviews for Transportation and Other Infrastructure Projects*, better known as the **Red Book**, which was last updated in 1988 and provides a “how-to” guide on ways improve the key permits and reviews required for projects. The initiatives are part of a broader effort to streamline infrastructure project reviews and build on previous executive actions, including a **2011 presidential memorandum** and **2012 executive order**.

### **Greater Sage-Grouse Not on Endangered Species List**

The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) announced last week that the greater sage grouse does not require enhanced protection under the *Endangered Species Act*. DOI's Fish and Wildlife Service was under a court-ordered deadline of September 30 to make a determination if further protection was warranted.

## **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

*Have a story to feature here? Send details to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).*

### **SLOCOG Study: Edna-Price Canyon Anza Trail**

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) is preparing a *Trail Master Plan* for a multipurpose trail between San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach through Edna Valley and Price Canyon. The larger trail corridor, called Juan Bautista de Anza, is a 1,200 mile trail extending from Nogales, Arizona to San Francisco, California and is based on the **travel route** taken to establish settlement in San Francisco. This is a long range planning study funded through a Caltrans Community Based Transportation Planning Grant and local funds. The end product will be possible trail alignments, initial design of the trail, and segments that have the potential to be built in the near future.

## **MEMBER REQUESTS**

*Email responses to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).*

### **NARC Membership: Request Results on the NARC Website**

When NARC issues a membership request, we compile the responses in a memo with responses attributed to the organization. We would like to post most of these memoranda online so that all members can benefit from them. Please email [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org) to tell us what you think.

## **FEATURED JOBS** *View full list of jobs!*

### **Budget Officer**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Bexar Aging Managing Local Ombudsman**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

### **Senior Planner – Regional & Community Planning**

Capital Area Council of Governments, Austin, TX

## **FUNDING**

*View full list of grants!*

### **NTIA Releases Broadband Funding Guide**

The National Telecommunications Information Agency (NTIA) released the **Broadband Funding Guide** with information on available federal funding for broadband planning, public access, digital literacy, adoption, and deployment. While the broadband grant programs funded under the *2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* have ended, funding is available

through other federal programs. A companion guide, NTIA's introduction to **effective public-private partnerships**, was released earlier this year.

## EVENTS

*View full list of events!*

### **The National Equity Atlas: New Equity Data for the 100 Largest Cities**

September 30, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET

PolicyLink and the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity are expanding the **National Equity Atlas** to include detailed data disaggregated by race, nativity, and income for the nation's 100 largest cities. The National Equity Atlas is a data and policy tool that provides indicators of demographic change, racial and economic inclusion, and the economic benefits of equity for all 50 states, the 150 largest regions, and nationwide. This webinar will provide a tour of the new city data and how to use it to advance policies and strategies to build more equitable, resilient, and vibrant cities.

### **Partnering and Planning for Regional Impact Webcast**

October 1, 2:00 Pm - 4:00 PM ET

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has shown its support for regional and multidimensional planning with implementation planning grants issued in 2010 and 2011 through the Office of Economic Resilience. Hear the compelling case for using regional approaches to address many of the pressing problems and threats confronting communities at HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research upcoming quarterly update.

### **Using Data to Plan Broadband and Digital Inclusion Initiatives**

October 15, 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

This BroadbandUSA webinar will explore how city governments can use surveys and data to plan their broadband and digital inclusion initiatives.

### **Save the Date! 2016 National Conference of Regions**

February 7-9, 2016\* – Washington, DC

The National Conference of Regions is NARC's forum to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda for the year ahead, targeting topics central to our members' missions and their local elected officials' focus. Additional information will be available later this year. *\*Note: Capitol Hill Day is February 10. Please make room in your travel plans to meet with your representatives.*

### **Highlight Your Region! Host NARC's Annual Conference in 2017!**

NARC seeks regions to host our Annual Conference in 2017, 2018, 2019, and beyond. Host regions are asked to partner with NARC staff on agenda development, mobile workshops, and fundraising for the conference. This is an excellent opportunity to highlight your regional successes before a national audience! Please fill out our **Host Region Worksheet** and submit it to Leslie Wollack ([leslie@narc.org](mailto:leslie@narc.org)) for further consideration. Help us fill our calendar and celebrate your region!

## CONTACT US

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