



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Senate is in session. House resumes session tomorrow.

Overview

The big news in Washington last week was the passage of the *Continuing Appropriations Act, 2016 (HR 719)*, which provides fiscal year 2016 appropriations for continuing projects and activities of the federal government through December 11. The continuing resolution (CR) was a clean extension with only minor changes to existing law, including a Transportation Security Administration requirement to implement changes compliant with criminal investigator positions and a U.S. Department of Homeland Security requirement to provide a variety of security-related updates and reports to Congress.

This Thursday, the members of the House Republican Conference will meet to elect a nominee to replace Speaker Boehner, with the final House vote for Speaker now scheduled for October 29. On the other side of the Hill, the Senate is expected to vote on cloture on the conferenced defense authorization (**HR 1735**), despite a threatened presidential veto.

EPA Lowers Ozone Standard

On October 1, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a **final rule** on the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground-level ozone. The rule lowers the ozone standard to 70 parts per billion (ppb) from the current standard of 75 ppb, which was set in 2008. EPA **projects** the revised standards will provide \$2.9 billion to \$5.9 billion in public health benefits and cost an estimated \$1.4 billion. NARC **testified** on this issue in June 2015 before the Senate EPW Committee. Click **HERE** for the regulatory impact analysis and **HERE** for EPA's website on ozone.

HHS Launches New Resources System to Improve Disaster Preparedness

Last week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) launched the Technical Resources Assistance Center and Information Exchange (**TRACIE**), which features resource materials, a help line, just-in-time suggestions and tools to share information in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. TRACIE also includes an **assistance center** to respond to specific requests related to disaster medicine, healthcare system preparedness, and public health preparedness.

House Introduces Bill to Extend PTC Implementation Deadline

On September 30, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leadership introduced the *Positive Train Control Enforcement and Implementation Act of 2015 (HR 3651)* to extend by three years the deadline for U.S. railroads to implement Positive Train Control (PTC) technology, which is designed to stop a train automatically before certain types of accidents occur. Under **current law**, carriers need to implement the technology by December 31. Several freight rail carriers have **indicated** that they would not be able to meet that deadline. No companion

legislation has been introduced in the Senate, although several Senate leaders have expressed support for the extension of the PTC deadline.

FAA Programs Extended through March 2016

Last week, both chambers passed and the President **signed** the *Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2015 (HR 3614)*, which extends authorization for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) programs and related revenue authorities for six months, through March 31, 2016. Congress is expected to work on a multi-year aviation authorization during this six-month period, although draft legislation has not been released by either chamber.

OTHER NEWS

National Cyber Security Awareness Month

President Obama designated the month of October as National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM). NCSAM is designed to engage and educate public and private sector partners through events and initiatives with the goal of raising awareness about cybersecurity and increasing the resiliency of the nation in the event of a cyber incident. Click **HERE** to learn how you can get involved. Additionally, the National Association of Counties (NACo) is hosting several **webinars** on the subject.

NLC's Annual City Fiscal Conditions Report

Last week, the National League of Cities (NLC) **released its 30th annual report** on City Fiscal Conditions. Cities continue to demonstrate improvements in their finances, although they are modest, according to the chief financial officers surveyed for the report. General funds have shown improvements in their balances and cities are factoring decreased federal and state assistance into their planning budgets and putting funds aside for potential downfalls.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Have a story to feature here? Send details to anna@narc.org.

Atlanta Millennials Included In Long-Term Regional Planning

Young adults from 10 counties around the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) region were divided into eight teams and tasked with developing pitches for eight different policy issues related to future planning for metro Atlanta. ARC's Executive Director, Doug Hooker, said it's important to hear from millennials. "It was very clear to me that we're making plans for a 20 or 25 year future for our community, but the people who are going to be the adults and the leadership roles in the community typically aren't at the table because they're early in their careers and some of them are still in school."

The young team members brought a lot of great ideas to the table, and ARC plans to implement some of them. One particular group, the **Millennial Advisory Panel**, focused on improving the region's education system, focusing on the disparities in education quality at low income schools when compared to schools with more resources. The group focused on improving the region's transit system and launched a website called Advance Atlanta.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Transportation Engineer/Planner/Modeler

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH

Request for Proposals: Mountain Accord (Phase II) Program Director

Wasatch Front Regional Council, Salt Lake City, UT

Budget Officer

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

USDA Awards \$34.3 Million to Support Communities' Local Foods Infrastructure

On Friday, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced nearly \$35 million in new funding through four grant programs to support local and regional food systems, including farmers markets. Secretary Vilsack has named strengthening local food systems as one of the four pillars of USDA's efforts to revitalize rural economies and communities. These grants are administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Under the current Administration, AMS and FNS have partnered to boost affordable access to local, fresh and healthy foods, which creates a gateway to opportunity for small and mid-size producers and benefits the health of all Americans, regardless of income level.

NOFA for Ladders of Opportunity Initiative: Pilot On-the-Job-Training Supportive Services Program

The Federal Highway Administration announced \$3 million in grants for a pilot On-the-Job-Training Supportive Services Program for state departments of transportation (DOTs), state agencies, or local governments applying through their state DOT. This Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is looking for innovative proposals for highway construction workforce development programs that promote avenues to the middle class for American workers and economic growth.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Connecting the Dots- First Steps in Working with Regional Offices

October 15, 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET

Learn about the structure and system of federal regional offices, how they have worked with local advocates and organizations in the past, and how they plan to engage with you to work on the Surgeon General's Call to Action on Walking and Walkable Communities.

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.*

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) for further consideration. Help us fill our calendar and celebrate your region!

CONTACT US

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