



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Both chambers are out of session until October 20.

Overview

Washington is still in shock from House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy's (R-CA) decision to withdraw from the race to replace retiring House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH). With no presumptive "next in line" candidate, the Republican caucus spent days trying to convince Representative Paul D. Ryan (R-WI) to run for the seat, so far to no avail. Representatives Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) and Daniel Webster (R-FL) are the currently announced candidates for the position, but getting the necessary 218 votes to become Speaker will be very difficult, if not impossible, for either of them. If Ryan does not run, many Republicans believe that a "caretaker candidate" - who would hold the position until the end of the current session, giving the caucus time to coalesce around another candidate - is the next best option. Although Boehner has announced that he will stay until another Speaker is selected, all of this palace intrigue makes the passage of important, "must-pass" legislation, including raising the debt ceiling and passage of a long-term transportation bill, much harder.

Waters of the United States Rule on Hold

On Friday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit **issued a nationwide stay** against the enforcement of the *Waters of the United States* rule amid disparate findings by courts around the country about whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can define which waters fall under the *Clean Water Act*. The divided panel said that a stay will restore uniformity to national water policy while litigation moves through the federal courts. The majority in the 2-1 opinion, in a case brought by 17 states, found no compelling evidence that the states would suffer immediate irreparable harm if the rule went into effect, nor that the integrity of the nation's waters would suffer imminent injury if the rule is not immediately implemented. According to the majority opinion, the "sheer breadth of the ripple effects caused by the rule's definitional changes counsels strongly in favor of maintaining the status quo for the time being." On August 27, a North Dakota federal court blocked implementation of the rule in 13 states. EPA and the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers issued the **final rule** August 28, when it went into effect in the remaining 37 states. On May 12, the House **passed** the *Regulatory Integrity Protection Act (HR 1732)*, which requires the EPA to withdraw the rule. Similar legislation (*Federal Water Quality Protection Act, S 1140*) is pending in the Senate.

Reconciliation Bill Advanced by House Budget Committee

Last week, the House Budget Committee approved a reconciliation bill (in a party line vote of 21-11) that would reduce the deficit by \$78.9 billion over the next decade but increase the deficit by at least \$5 billion during each of the four decades after 2025. The measure would repeal much of the 2010 Health Care Law, and suspend federal aid to Planned Parenthood for a year. The proposal is expected to meet resistance in the Senate and the White House already indicated that the President would veto the measure if passed by Congress in its current form.

FHWA Seeks Comment on New Proposal to Encourage Design Flexibility

Comment Period Closes: December 7

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced **proposed revisions** to encourage the design of lower-speed roads to align better with community and environmental needs. This represents the start of several proposed regulatory and program policy changes at the agency to allow more flexibility for state, city, and county engineers in the design of highway projects. As a first step in the series of changes, FHWA proposes to reduce the number of design criteria for highways designed for speeds of less than 50 miles per hour, from 13 required elements to two required elements. On roads with design speeds of 50 mph or more that typically carry our nation's freight and larger traffic volumes, the number of criteria would be reduced from 13 to 10. FHWA is seeking comments on the proposal by December 7. This announcement follows FHWA's recent publication of ***Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding, Design, and Environmental Review: Addressing Common Misconceptions***, which debunks several myths about the federal rules regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and attempts to distinguish between federal standards and state and local practice.

OTHER NEWS

NARC's GIFT Website Featured Urban Sustainability Event

Last week, Virginia Tech's **Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability** (CLiGS) hosted an event on urban sustainability. Larry Wiseman, a fellow at CLiGS, provided attendees with an overview of the **Green Infrastructure and Forestry Toolkit** (GIFT), a comprehensive resource database and guide for green infrastructure planning created by NARC and CLiGS. Other presentations focused on green infrastructure and its role in mitigating the effects of climate change, improving public health and livability, and aiding in stormwater management. The audience included approximately 50 planners and stakeholders from throughout the region.

Green Infrastructure Wizard

EPA released a new web-based tool that helps local officials and other community members consider the benefits and uses of green infrastructure. The Green Infrastructure Wizard, or GIWiz, responds to growing community interest in using green infrastructure as a means of addressing water quality and a range of other local goals.

National Preparedness Month: 20 Great Takeaways Report

September was National Preparedness Month. The *National Preparedness Month: 20 Great Takeaways* report highlights key points and lessons learned from the National Preparedness Month webinar series.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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

David Warm Celebrates 25 Years with MARC

David Warm celebrated 25 years in his role as executive director at the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) in Kansas City, Missouri this summer. Warm has received numerous awards for his work, including the National Public Service Award from the National Academy of Public Administration in 2015; Distinguished Service Award from Kansas State University's School of Architecture, Planning, and Design in 2013; Nonprofit Professional of the Year award from Nonprofit Connect in 2012; and NARC's Walter Scheiber Award in 2006. Under Warm's leadership, MARC has earned a reputation as one of the top regional councils in the nation. Congratulations, David!

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

RFQ No. 15-05: Complete Streets Initiative Consultant

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Senior Planner

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

Chief of Staff

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Chief Financial Officer

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Budget Officer

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Request for Information: TIP Management System

Stark County Regional Planning Commission, Canton, OH

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

USDA SNAP Healthy Eating Projects Webinar

October 14, 2:00 PM ET

Applications Due: December 16

Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) **announced** nearly \$17 million in grant funding for state, local, and national organizations to help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants purchase more fruits and vegetables. In selecting grantees, USDA will prioritize projects that maximize the share of funds used for direct incentives to participants and test innovative strategies that increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP participants. This is the second round of awards made through the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive program established by the **2014 Farm Bill**.

EDA Solicits Applications to Operate as Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers

Informational teleconference, October 19, 2:00 PM ET*

On Friday, EDA announced the publication of a Federal Funding Opportunity under its Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms (TAAF) program. The TAAF program provides cost-shared technical assistance to help strengthen the competitiveness of American companies that have been negatively impacted by increasing imports. EDA operates the TAAF program through a national network of Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers (**TAACs**) and is soliciting applications from organizations to operate as TAACs. Application packages are available **electronically** through **www.grants.gov**. **To register for the teleconference, email **TAAF2015@eda.gov** with the subject line: "TAAF FFO Teleconference Registration."*

EVENTS

View full list of events!

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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