



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The House and Senate are in session.

This Week

Both the House and the Senate reconvene today. This week, the House is expected to vote to renew the Export-Import Bank, consider the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2015 (**HR 3819**, more information below), and may consider legislation to raise the debt limit, which **Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew projects will be exhausted** by November 3. Finally, the House is scheduled to elect its Speaker on Thursday of this week. Meanwhile, the Senate will resume consideration of the cybersecurity information sharing bill (**S 754**). Before Thursday night, the Senate will also have to consider the three-week surface transportation extension. The House and Senate are both expected to adjourn Friday.

House Committee Passes Transportation Reauthorization Bill

On Thursday, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure completed its markup of its version of transportation reauthorization – the **Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform (STRR) Act** (HR 3763). It was passed by voice vote at 3:15pm ET. Earlier in the day, an amendment supported by NARC to increase STP suballocation was offered by Representatives Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Dina Titus (D-NV) and was brought before the committee. The Davis-Titus amendment would have significantly increased STP suballocation, increasing to 67% the portion of STP that is distributed by population. The amendment would have also increased transparency to give a better view of how states distribute STP dollars to areas under 200,000. Despite strong bipartisan support and statements of support to the committee from Representatives Davis, Titus, Donna Edwards (D-MD), and Lois Frankel (D-FL), the amendment was withdrawn and no vote was taken. Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) committed to working with Representative Davis on this issue before the bill gets to the floor of the House.

As for the bill itself, the STRR Act is written as a six-year bill, but would require congressional action on funding to ensure the last three years of the bill. The intention is that only the first three years of the bill will be funded when the bill comes to the floor. In total, the bill would provide \$325 million in contract authority over the entire six-year life of the bill. See **NARC's updated summary of STRR** on the specific legislative items NARC has been following most closely. A more detailed analysis is coming.

House Lawmakers Introduce HTF Patch

Following the markup on Friday, Chairman Shuster introduced the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2015 (**HR 3819**), which extends surface transportation programs through November 20, giving Congress an additional 22 days to consider long-term surface transportation legislation. The current authorization for surface transportation programs expires Oct. 29. In addition to the extension, HR 3819 includes language that would give railroads until December 31, 2018 (with an option for an additional two-year extension for eligible railroads) to implement

positive train control technology, which could make passage of the measure more difficult than passing a simple, clean extension. The Senate passed its version of surface transportation reauthorization, the **DRIVE Act**, at the end of August.

HHS Announces Energy Assistance Funding

Last week, the Administration for Children and Families, which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, **announced** awards of approximately \$3 billion in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding to states and territories to help low-income households heat and cool their homes. The funding can be used to help pay home energy bills and the cost of energy crises, minor weatherization, and energy-related home repairs.

POTUS Discusses Land and Water Conservation Fund in Radio Address

President Barack Obama used his weekly radio address to call on Congress to approve a reauthorization of the **Land and Water Conservation Fund**, which uses oil and gas royalties to fund the purchase of parkland. The fund's authorization expired on Sept. 30. A reauthorization bill has bipartisan support in both houses, but some Congressional Republicans want to see changes in how the fund is managed and have resisted calls to vote on the legislation.

OTHER NEWS

NARC Celebrates 6th Anniversary of Canoemobile Outdoor Program

On Wednesday, NARC staff and Commissioner Geof Benson, a NARC board member, joined Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN), the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Park Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to celebrate the 6th year anniversary of the **Canoemobile program**. Canoemobile connects thousands of urban youth to the outdoors through their local parks and waterways. The program engages students to improve school performance, cultivates a stewardship ethic, and creates pathways to pursue educational and career opportunities in the outdoors. Commissioner Benson has been a strong advocate for this program in the Northeastern Indiana and Chicago region.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Transportation Modeling Data Analyst

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

Water Resource Planner

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pittsburgh, PA

Data Coordinator

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Transportation Planner

Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, Omaha, NE

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

EVENTS

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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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