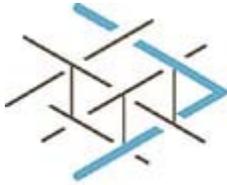


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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

VOL. XIII, No. 42, November 4, 2013

eRegions

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Colleagues,

In case you missed it, last week, NARC submitted comments to the docket regarding transit provider representation on MPO boards. At issue is the agencies interpretation of a change made in MAP-21 to include transit operators on the list of folks that should have input to their MPOs. NARC's comments are [HERE](#).

Additionally, NARC signed onto an endorsement letter, available [HERE](#), for the Older Americans Reauthorization Act (S 1562). Late last week the Senate Health, Education, Labor and

PROGRAM UPDATE POLICY UPDATE

REGIONS360

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES UPCOMING EVENTS



2014 NATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF REGIONS
FEBRUARY 9-11, 2014
WASHINGTON, DC

SAVE THE DATE!

PROGRAM UPDATE

President Obama Signs Executive Order on Climate Change

Resiliency: On November 1, President Obama signed an executive order directing federal agencies to assist communities in developing resiliency to climate change. The Order directs agencies to identify and remove any federal government hurdles to climate resiliency and to reform policies and funding programs that unintentionally make the U.S. more vulnerable to climate change-related risks, such as policies that encourage communities to rebuild to past standards after disasters instead of following stronger standards. The Order also emphasizes the need for information and tools to help state, local and private-sector leaders make climate-smart decisions, and establishes an interagency council on climate preparedness and resilience chaired by the White House. The council will receive advice from a task force of state, local

Pensions (HELP) committee approved this Act by a voice vote to send to the full chamber. NARC endorsed the bipartisan proposal and worked closely with committee members and industry partners to move this bill through the committee.

Also last week, NARC joined over 400 other organizations on a letter to bring the Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization to the floor. The measure, which passed the full committee in July, has not been considered by the full Senate, although there is a possibility the full bill may be brought to the floor by the end of the year. The text of the letter is available [HERE](#).

Additional details on each of these items are available in our Policy Update – as well as during our upcoming February conference.

Finally, please stay tuned this week as we officially kick off registration for your 2014 National Conference of Regions. This is NARC's annual Washington, DC conference – focused on Administration,

and tribal leaders on how the federal government can help communities deal with the impacts of climate change. Click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) for more information.

EPA Releases Public Comment on Climate Change Adaptation

Plan: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released for public comment several draft implementation plans, which provide information about how the agency will meet priorities identified in its climate change adaptation plan. The Office of Water Implementation Plan focuses on the following key elements: Vulnerability of water resources, including clean water and drinking water programs, to climate change; Priority actions for water program response to climate change; Office of Water contribution to meeting EPA strategic measures on climate change; Legal and enforcement issues; Training and outreach for climate change adaptation; Partnerships with Tribes; Populations and places vulnerable to a changing climate; and. Program evaluation and cross-Agency pilot projects. Click [HERE](#) to access EPA's letter on the comment period. Click [HERE](#) for the draft plans. Click [HERE](#) for the open docket information and to submit comments.

EPA Report on Green Infrastructure Benefits: The U.S. EPA released a new report that can help towns, cities, and counties use cost-benefit analysis to show that grassy swales, green roofs, porous pavement and other green infrastructure practices can capture stormwater at a lower cost than constructing traditional storm drains. The report cites examples of 13 urban, suburban and rural communities to show that green infrastructure practices that demonstrate that "low impact development" principles are economically beneficial. Click [HERE](#) for the report.

Sustainable Design and Green Building Toolkit for Local

Governments: The U.S. EPA has released an updated toolkit to help local government identify and remove barriers to sustainable design and green building in existing code ordinances. The toolkit includes a handy assessment tool in Excel that local governments can use to evaluate their codes and ordinances. Click [HERE](#) to access the toolkit.

Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Launches New

Blog and Revamped Website: The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), as part of its commitment to strengthen the nation's clean energy economy and to increase communications with the public and other stakeholders, launch of a new blog on Energy.gov. Click [HERE](#) to access the blog.

Congressional priorities and legislation critical to regions nationwide. Registration, hotel and additional information will be distributed before the end of the week.

We look forward to seeing you in February,
Fred

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President

Hon. Penny Gross

Supervisor,
Fairfax County, VA

Chair Jim Hassinger,

Executive Directors
Council
Executive Director,
Southwestern
Pennsylvania
Commission

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Programs

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Office Manager

Bridget Gribbin

Intern

Taylor Markwith

Program Associate

Lindsey Riley

Applied Solutions Featured Clean Energy Project: Do you have a local clean energy project that includes innovation in energy or water efficiency? Leverages innovative financing? Diversifies local energy sources to include renewables? If so, Applied Solutions is looking for these and similar projects to highlight. Visit their [Clean Economy Page](#) for more information.

POLICYUPDATE

The Senate is in session. The House is in recess until November 12.

Transit Provider Representation on MPO Boards: On October 30, NARC submitted comments to the docket in reference to a proposed policy guidance issued jointly by U.S. Federal Transit Administration and the U.S. Federal Highways Administration. At issue is the agencies interpretation of a change made in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act to include transit operators on the list of individuals that should have input to their metropolitan planning organization (MPOs). Unfortunately, the agencies have used this small change in the law to attempt to require that transit operators receive a voting seat on every MPO board. You can read more about the regulation [HERE](#); NARC's comments can be accessed [HERE](#).

Older Americans Act Reauthorization Approved by Senate

Committee: Last week the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee approved by a voice vote to send the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act (S 1562) to the full chamber. NARC endorsed the bipartisan proposal and worked closely with Committee members and industry partners to move this bill through the Committee. NARC's endorsement letter is available [HERE](#). While there is still disagreement on issues regarding funding formulas under the Older Americans Act (OAA), HELP Committee Chairman Tom Harkin committed to work closely with other members to reach a compromise prior to floor consideration. Additional resources on the OAA reauthorization process and a link to the full Committee markup are available on NARC's website [HERE](#).

NARC Joins over 400 Organizations on Letter to Encourage

Senators to Bring WIA to the Floor: Last week NARC, along with 424 national and local workforce organizations sent a letter to U.S. Senate

Deputy of
Communications
Anna Rosenbaum
Communications
Associate
Erich W. Zimmermann
Director of Transportation
Programs

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of *eRegions*, **visit our**
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HELP Committee leadership encouraging full chamber consideration for the bipartisan Workforce Investment Act (WIA) reauthorization bill (S 1356). The measure, which passed the full Committee in July, has not been considered by the full Senate, although members and staff have indicated that there is a possibility the full bill may be brought to the floor by the end of the year. The text of the letter and list of supporting organizations is available **HERE**. Additional resources on Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization are available **HERE**.

House Committee Approves FEMA and Clean Water Act

Legislation: The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee passed its mark up of the first ever reauthorization of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the FEMA Reauthorization Act (HR 3300). This bill would reauthorize FEMA through FY16, authorize and provide a framework for the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), reauthorize and codify the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Response System. Click **HERE** for more information about H.R. 3300. During that same mark up, the Committee also approved H.R. 2026, the Silviculture Regulatory Consistency Act, which clarifies that forest roads and silviculture activities are not to be regulated as point sources under the Clean Water Act.

Sequester Changes Being Pushed in the Senate: Senators Collins (R-ME) and Manchin (D-WV) are working on increased sequester flexibility for federal agencies for inclusion in a broader budget deal to be considered in December. Collins' will look to move forward her previous proposal, S 465. The deadline for budget negotiations specific to FY14 spending is December 13; the continuing resolution expires on January 15.

House Passed Water Resources Bill: Last week, the House passed the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) (HR 3080), which is based on the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA), biannual legislation last authorized in 2007. The bill authorizes and sets policy for Corps water resources, environmental, structural, navigational, flood protection and hydrology projects. The measure contains no earmarks, and includes provisions that streamline environmental permitting; increase funding for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for port maintenance and dredging; deauthorize \$12 billion of inactive projects; allow non-federal partners to contribute funding to move studies, projects and permits; and, preserve the inland Waterways Trust Fund. The Senate bill (S. 601) passed in May. The House and

Senate will now appoint a conference committee to resolve the differences between the two bills.

Freight Panel Releases Recommendations: The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Panel on 21st Century Freight Transportation this week released a set of recommendations they feel will improve the efficiency of goods movement and strengthen the nation's economy. Among the panel's recommendations are a call to identify a revenue source that can be dedicated to freight movement and a competitive grant program for freight Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS).

The panel made the following recommendations:

- Direct the Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with the Secretary of the Army and the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, to establish a comprehensive national freight transportation policy and designate a national, multimodal freight network;
- Ensure robust public investment in all modes of transportation on which freight movement relies, and incentivize additional private investment in freight transportation facilities, to maintain and improve the condition and performance of the freight transportation network;
- Promote and expedite the development and delivery of projects and activities that improve and facilitate the efficient movement of goods;
- Authorize dedicated, sustainable funding for multimodal freight Projects of National and Regional Significance through a grant process and establish clear benchmarks for project selection. Projects eligible for such funding would have a regional or national impact on the overall performance of the multimodal freight network identified by the Secretary of Transportation;
- Direct the Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of the Army, to identify and recommend sustainable sources of revenue across all modes of transportation that would provide the necessary investment in the Nation's multimodal freight network and align contributions with use of, and expected benefit of increased investment in, such network; and
- Review, working through the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Ways and Means, the

Secretary's freight funding and revenue recommendations and develop specific funding and revenue options for freight transportation projects prior to Congress' consideration of the surface transportation reauthorization bill in 2014.

The panel's full report can be downloaded [HERE](#).

House and Senate Begin Negotiations on Farm Bill

Reauthorization: Last week 41 conferees from the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate met to begin hashing out overdue long-term Farm Bill reauthorization. NARC also joined over 25 industry partners on a letter to Farm Bill conferees outlining priorities for the Rural Development (RD) title. These priorities include supporting the \$227 million in mandatory funding for the RD title provided by the Senate's reauthorization proposal. The full text of the letter is available [HERE](#) and additional resources on Farm Bill reauthorization can be found [HERE](#).

REGIONS360

Fostering Livable Communities Highlights NCTCOG: The U.S. Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) October 2013 Newsletter (which you can read [HERE](#)) highlighted the North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG) program titled "Planning Livable Military Communities." The goals of the program included considering options for sustainable transportation, economic development, housing and retail markets in the area surrounding the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Fort Worth. For more information about NCTCOG's program, click [HERE](#).

FHWA Recognizes MARC's 100 Point Scoring System: FHWA recently released a case study to assist MPOs in addressing livability through the planning process, which included the approach utilized by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) in Kansas City. MARC uses a 100 point scoring system – which includes livability elements – to inform the decision-making process for project inclusion in the long-range plan. You can read more about this case study [HERE](#).

Boardman Highlights Regional Importance of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Service: Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman testified this week before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine. The hearing, held in Hartford, Connecticut – was specifically

about the recent power outage on Metro North's New Haven Line, and Boardman used the opportunity to highlight the general importance of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. "We must stop taking this vital infrastructure for granted and start investing in the future of the region and the nation," Boardman said. His complete testimony can be found [HERE](#).

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Climate Solutions University Accepting Applications

Application Deadline: Rolling

The Model Forest Policy Program is offering a special funding opportunity for qualifying U.S. urban and rural communities working together addressing ecosystem services. Urban decision makers need to plan for climate impacts that result from land changes beyond their jurisdictional boundaries. To find out more about the Climate Solutions University, click [HERE](#).

IBM – Smarter Cities Challenge

Deadline: November 8, 2013

IBM is seeking applications for its Smarter Cities Challenge. The Challenge places top talent from IBM in cities around the world to help address critical challenges such as sustainability, energy, transportation, economic development, education, public safety, health, and social services. More information about the program is available [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Community Investment Initiative

Deadline: November 12, 2013

The USDA is seeking applications for grants that will be awarded to organizations to help rural businesses create jobs and spur economic development. USDA is making \$5.6 million available through the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI), a program that generates economic activity in rural areas. Applications must be submitted to the USDA Rural Development state office where the applicant's headquarters are located. Information is available [HERE](#).

NOAA - Climate Program Office FY 2014

November 14, 2013

NOAA advances scientific and technical programs to help society cope with, and adapt to, today's variations in climate and prepare for tomorrow's. Toward this end, the agency conducts and supports climate

research, essential oceanic and atmospheric observations, modeling, information management, assessments, interdisciplinary decision support research, outreach, education, and stakeholder partnership development. The full announcement of opportunity is available on the [Grants.Gov](#) website. Click [HERE](#) for information.

Environmental Protection Agency – Urban Waters

Deadline: November 15, 2013

The EPA is soliciting proposals for projects that will advance EPA's water quality and environmental justice goals. Projects proposed for funding must take place entirely within and focus on one of 18 specific Eligible Geographic Areas, as listed in Section I.A and illustrated on the Urban Waters Small Grants program [mapping website](#). More information is available [HERE](#).

Wells Fargo Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Deadline: December 16, 2013

Designed to support projects that link economic development and community well-being to the stewardship and health of the environment, Wells Fargo and the NFWF have launched a five-year, \$15 million initiative that will be used to leverage other public and private investments with an expected total impact of over \$37.5 million. Funding priorities for this program include supporting sustainable agricultural practices; promoting land and water conservation; facilitating investments in green infrastructure and energy efficiency; and encouraging broad-based citizen participation in project implementation. More information is available [HERE](#).

Department of the Treasury – Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI)

Deadline: December 23, 2013

Funding is available for the CDFI Program, which aims to use federal resources to invest in CDFIs and to build their capacity to serve low-income people and communities that lack access to affordable financial products and services. Through the CDFI program, the CDFI Fund provides two types of monetary awards to CDFIs - Financial Assistance awards and Technical Assistance awards. More information on this opportunity is available [HERE](#), and more information on the CDFI program is available [HERE](#). Funding for the Native American CDFI program is also available. More information can be found [HERE](#).

National Endowment for the Arts

Deadline: January 13, 2014

The NEA Our Town Program aims to support creative placemaking projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core. Our Town will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to improve their quality of life; encourage greater creative activity; foster stronger community identity and a sense of place; and revitalize economic development. More information is available [HERE](#).

Community Forest Program Grant

Application Due: January 15, 2014

The US Forest Service's Community Forest Program (CFP) protects forests that are important for people and the places they call home. CFP provides funding to local governments, tribal governments and nonprofits to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits. Click [HERE](#) for more information about available funding.

National Science Foundation (NSF) - Cyber-Physical Systems

Due Date: January 29, 2014

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have a shared interest in advancing basic and applied research in Cyber Physical Systems (CPS), which are systems in which physical processes are tightly intertwined with networked computing. For transportation, CPS will provide the foundation necessary for a safe, efficient highway transportation system connecting vehicles, infrastructure, people, and goods in a vibrant, competitive economy. More information is available [HERE](#).

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Deadline: January 30, 2014

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the availability of \$181 million to develop commercial-scale biorefineries or retrofit existing facilities with appropriate technology to develop advanced biofuels. Funding is available through the Biorefinery Assistance Program provides loan guarantees to viable commercial-scale facilities to develop new and emerging technologies for advanced biofuels. The announcement is available [HERE](#), more information about the program is available [HERE](#) and the full text of the Federal Register notice is available [HERE](#).

NSF - Cyber-Enabled Sustainability Science and Engineering

Due Date: February 4, 2014

The Cyber-Enabled Sustainability Science and Engineering (CyberSEES) program aims to advance interdisciplinary research in which the science and engineering of sustainability are enabled by new advances in computing, and where computational innovation is grounded in the context of sustainability problems. More information is available [HERE](#).

Energy for Sustainability

Due Date: February 20, 2014

This program supports fundamental research and education that will enable innovative processes for the sustainable production of electricity and transportation fuels. Processes for sustainable energy production must be environmentally benign, reduce greenhouse gas production, and utilize renewable resources. Current interest areas in sustainable energy technologies are: Biomass Conversion, Biofuels & Bioenergy, Photovoltaic Solar Energy, Wind Energy, and Advanced Batteries for Transportation. Learn more about this program [HERE](#).

NSF - Environmental Sustainability

Due Date: March 20, 2014

The Environmental Sustainability program supports engineering research that seeks to balance society's need to provide ecological protection and maintain stable economic conditions. Research in Environmental Sustainability typically considers long time horizons and may incorporate contributions from the social sciences and ethics. There are four principal general research areas which are supported: Industrial Ecology, Green Engineering, Ecological Engineering, Earth Systems Engineering. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

EPA to Hold Public Listening Sessions on Reducing Carbon Pollution from Existing Power Plants

Following through on President Obama's Climate Action Plan, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will hold 11 public listening sessions across the country to solicit ideas and input from the public and stakeholders about the best Clean Air Act approaches to reducing carbon pollution from existing power plants. Power plants are the

nation's largest stationary source of carbon pollution, responsible for about one third of all greenhouse gas pollution in the United States. Click [HERE](#) for more information about EPA's carbon pollution standards for the power sector. Click [HERE](#) for the complete list of sessions, locations, and to complete online registration.

WEBINAR: Intra-organization Energy Efficiency Competitions

November 5, 3:00-4:00 PM EST

This webinar hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy will show how public and private organizations can boost their energy efficiency through friendly competitions by highlighting two organizations that have had success with this: Better Buildings Challenge partner City of El Paso and Better Buildings, Better Plans Partner Legrand. Click [HERE](#) to register for the webinar.

WEBINAR: What Planners Need to Know about Wildfire Protection

November 6, 2:00-3:30 PM EST

Wildfires have become more intense and frequent as forests thicken with unburned fuels and changes in climate increase uncertainty in future conditions. How can communities in our growing wildland-urban interface prepare for this growing threat? This webinar will discuss what planners and communities need to know to reduce risks of wildfire. Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: Smart Growth America on free technical assistance

November 6, 2:00-3:30 PM EST

Smart Growth America is now accepting applications for 2014's free technical assistance workshops. Each year Smart Growth America offers free assistance to cities, counties, Indian tribes and regional governments interested in achieving their local goals through better development strategies. If you are considering applying for this year's free workshops, join them for a free webinar discussion of the 12 types of workshops we offer as well as the application process and important deadlines. Click [HERE](#) for registration information. Click [HERE](#) for more information regarding Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities.

Appalachian Regional Commission's Transforming Appalachia's Economy

November 6-7, 2013, Charleston, WV

Entrepreneurs are creating a new economic model in Appalachia--one based on local investment and local ownership--and their impact is already being felt in some of the Region's core sectors, such as

manufacturing, health care, and food production. The ***Toward Prosperity*** conference will explore ways Appalachian communities can develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem that provides support and growth opportunities for both new and established businesses. Click [HERE](#) for more information or to register.

NARC's 2014 National Conference of Regions

February 9-11, 2014, Washington, DC

The National Conference of Regions is the forum that NARC uses to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda on topics of relevance and importance to executive directors and local elected officials representing regional organizations and boards. Additional information will be available in late 2013.

NARC's 48th Annual Conference and Exhibition

June 6-11, 2014, Louisville, KY

The Annual Conference and Exhibition is the largest national event focused on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education. Held annually in June, NARC's Annual Conference is the premier place to learn how to engage in effective regional collaboration. Additional information will be available in early 2014.

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