

November 16, 2015 [View this email in your browser](#)



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members:

As many of you know, this is my last week with NARC. It has been a great privilege to lead this organization and I want to thank the Board and the Executive Directors Council for giving me this opportunity. I also want to extend a special thank you to the entire NARC membership – your passion and dedication to regionalism are central to the success of this organization. All of you do such innovative work serving your regions and it has been an honor to represent you here in Washington.

Beginning December 1, I will start my new job as Director of Government Relations with **The Hershey Company**. Though I will no longer be employed by NARC, this is certainly not goodbye, as I look forward to our friendship in the future. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime on my personal email, joannaturnerdc@gmail.com, or at Hershey's after the first of the month.

My best wishes to you all, and my sincere appreciation for your work.
Joanna L. Turner

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

This Week

Both chambers are back in DC with their attention largely focused on Friday's terrorist attacks in Paris. The Senate is expected to take up the **Transportation-HUD** appropriations bill, which was approved by committee in June. The House will consider a series of financial bills on a variety of topics, including mortgage lending standards and auto loans.

Senate Names Conferees for Transportation Negotiations

Last Tuesday, the Senate approved a motion to initiate conference negotiations with the House on surface transportation legislation. The Senate also approved a motion to instruct conferees to adopt rail safety provisions that were included in the Senate's DRIVE Act. From the Republican side, the Senate conferees are Senators Inhofe (R-OK), Thune (R-SD), Hatch (R-UT), Murkowski (R-AK), Fischer (R-NE), Barrasso (R-WY), and Cornyn (R-TX). From the Democratic side, the conferees are Senators Boxer (D-CA), Brown (D-OH), Nelson (D-FL), Wyden (D-OR), Durbin (D-IL), and Schumer (D-NY). Click **HERE** for House Republican conferees and **HERE** for House Democratic conferees. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx sent **letters** to House and Senate conferees raising concerns about various reauthorization provisions including those related to funding, safety, permitting and project delivery. NARC and its coalition partners are in the process of developing a similar letter. The current extension for surface transportation programs expires November 20 and a short-term extension is expected before a final deal can be reached on a multi-year reauthorization.

Senate Passes Revised Defense Authorization Act; Military Construction, Veterans Appropriations Bills

Also on Tuesday, the Senate passed two additional appropriations bills:

- **S. 1356**, the FY2016 *National Defense Authorization Act*, was passed in a 91-3 vote. The bill authorizes \$599 billion for defense-related programs, which is \$5 billion less than the original conference agreement vetoed by President Obama last month. Following the veto, Congress cleared a budget deal to raise defense and nondefense discretionary caps for two years. The budget deal increased the defense discretionary cap by \$25 billion and also provided \$8 billion in defense Overseas Contingency Operations funding beyond the President's request. Although the House passed the bill last week, that chamber must hold another vote because of technical changes made by the Senate. The President is expected to sign the bill.
- **H.R. 2029**, the FY2016 *Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act*, was passed unanimously. The bill provides \$82 billion in discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The bill provides \$8.4 billion for military construction projects, which is \$1.5 billion above the FY2015 level and \$355 million below the President's request. The Senate also provided \$100 million to construct extended veterans care facilities. The House approved the bill in April, which is now expected to serve as the legislative vehicle for a FY2016 omnibus appropriations bill. The current continuing resolution expires December 11.

OTHER NEWS

Cyber-Seniors Program

Cyber-Seniors is a documentary and a program that began as a high school project launched by two sisters in 2009. The sisters realized how learning to use the Internet had transformed their grandparents' lives. After learning basic skills, their grandparents were in touch several times a week by email, Facebook, and Skype. The Internet was instrumental in keeping their family connected despite busy schedules and living in different cities. Inspired by this realization, the sisters started the Cyber-Seniors program to help other seniors get online. **Watch this short video** to find out how the campaign got started and learn how to start a **Cyber-Seniors program** in your region.

Transportation and Health Tool

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a new Transportation and Health Tool to help state DOTs, metropolitan planning organizations, and communities evaluate existing transportation systems and develop strategies to improve health. The tool allows users to compare their performance to other states and communities on a variety of health-related transportation indicators. Last week, USDOT held a webinar on the tool. If you missed it, you may find the **presentation slides** useful. You can also use the Transportation and Health Tool website to **look up the indicator scores for your area** and review the **strategies** that can be used to improve health through transportation. This **one-page guide** can assist you with the website.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Senior Environmental Planner

OH-KY-IN Regional Council of Governments, Cincinnati, OH

Land Use/Transportation Planner

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Kelso, WA

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

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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