



Happy Holidays. This is the last issue of *eRegions* for the year. Please look for the next issue in early January!

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is not in session. Both chambers return for the 115th Congress on January 3.

More Cabinet Picks

President-elect Trump continues to fill out his cabinet. This weekend, Trump named Representative Mick Mulvaney (R-SC) as his director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB Director plays a key role in the government, overseeing all federal spending and regulatory actions by the government. Mulvaney was elected to Congress in 2010 and quickly became one of Congress's most outspoken fiscal hawks. He has been an advocate for spending cuts, often taking on his own party to push for more aggressive curbs to government spending.

Representative and former Navy SEAL Ryan Zinke (R-MT) has been nominated as Interior Secretary. Zinke is generally a proponent of oil and gas interests, and has criticized the Obama Administration for closing loopholes for fossil fuel companies and showing little regard for coal-producing communities. Zinke also voted to approve the Keystone XL pipeline. His wife, Lolita Zinke, is listed as a member of the transition team.

Former Texas Governor Rick Perry has been nominated as Energy Secretary. Perry, who ran for president in 2012 and 2016, famously forgot the U.S. Department of Energy as one of the agencies he wanted to eliminate during a 2011 debate. As governor for fifteen years, he advocated for a mix of energy sources and currently serves on the board of the company that is seeking to construct the Dakota Access Pipeline. Perry has also expressed doubt over how human activity affects climate change.

Outstanding Cabinet positions include Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Freedom Caucus Targets Hundreds of Obama Policies for Repeal

The House Freedom Caucus sent President-elect Donald Trump more than 200 Obama administration actions to overturn in the first 100 days of the new administration. Some of the policies have already been targeted by Republicans, including the so-called Waters of the U.S. rule, which would expand federal jurisdiction over streams and wetlands; ending the Export-Import Bank; and halting the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) cross-state rule to cut air pollution moving from Midwest power plants to East Coast states. The Federal Communications Commission's 2015 net neutrality rules designed to treat all web traffic the same are also on the GOP's chopping block, as is the EPA's Renewable Fuel Standard and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau policies.

The caucus also requested a budget-related item in its list of regulatory actions it wants to see from Trump. Specifically, the caucus asked that Trump direct OMB to freeze all pending federal rules and regulations.

Additionally, the caucus wants the new administration not to send any proposed or final rules for publication in the Federal Register until a Trump-appointed department or agency head approves it and asks for a 60-day delay of the effective date.

Defense Spending Report

After increasing by more than 66% in real terms from FY 2000 to FY 2010, national defense spending has declined 16.6% since 2011. The impact of these cuts depends in part on the number of defense personnel and amount of defense contract revenue in each state and region. The Office of Economic Adjustment's Defense Spending by State Fiscal Year 2015 report highlights factors, such as the regional expenditures from military bases or private contractors, which can be used to evaluate each state's potential exposure to fluctuations in defense spending.

Produced through a cooperative agreement with Chmura Economic & Analytics, a Richmond, VA-based economics research firm, the report examines U.S. defense spending in FY 2015 at the state and local levels, for all 50 states and Washington, D.C. The report, 26-minute webinar with data presentation, methodology, and key findings are available. Fill out brief registration information for full access.

WIFIA Rules Published in the Federal Register

Both the interim final implementation rule, **Credit Assistance for Water Infrastructure Projects**, and the proposed fee rule, **Fees for Water Infrastructure Project Applications under WIFIA**, were posted in the Federal Register today. The WIFIA program welcomes public comment on or before February 17th. See these **PowerPoint slides** from a webinar series that EPA/WIFIA hosted in November and December.

Final Rule on MPO Coordination and Planning Area Reform Released

The MPO Coordination Final Rule was made available by USDOT last week, in advance of its publication in the Federal Register. This final rule makes two major changes to the proposed rule released earlier this year: 1) it includes a process by which MPO(s) and state(s) may seek a waiver if they can successfully demonstrate to the Secretary why it is not feasible to produce a single set of planning documents AND can successfully demonstrate how all MPOs are currently achieving the goals of the rule; and 2) pushes implementation until 2024, or two years after the release of the 2020 Census results. NARC has been visiting Capitol Hill to educate lawmakers on the negative impact of the proposal on MPOs and encouraging their opposition to the rule. We will follow up with a more in-depth analysis and further possible NARC response.

Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act

The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act – so-called as a tribute to President-elect Trump by Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA)–was passed on December 10th as one of the final achievements of the 114th Congress.

The WIIN Act is a broader package that includes the *Water Resources Development Act of 2016* (WRDA), which passed both chambers in September; the *Water and Waste Act of 2016*, which authorizes a more active role for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in safe drinking water

infrastructure (including in Flint, Michigan); and drought relief for California. Negotiations for the WIIN Act were carried out at the staff level, rather than in conference committee. Final legislation was released on December 5th.

The final bill includes nearly \$11.7 billion for water infrastructure projects, \$170 million to help Flint, and a 70-page provision to provide drought aid to California. WIIN Act provisions include:

- Authorizes thirty new Army Corps of Engineers projects and modifies eight existing projects, and allows the Corps to provide technical assistance to non-federal project sponsors developing their own feasibility study.
- Authorizes emergency aid for Flint to support community lead prevention and education programming. Passage of both the CR and WIIN Act were essential in securing \$170 million for safe drinking water access in Flint and other communities. This provision also includes \$20 million for the *Water Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act* (WIFIA) and expands the scope of allowable projects.
- Allows additional pumping, desalination, and storage of water in California from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to the Central Valley Project to aid in drought relief.
- Authorizes the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, *Lake Tahoe Restoration Act*, Delaware River Basin Conservation Program, and Columbia River Basin Restoration Initiative.
- Authorizes significant new funding to help communities expand water supply through investments in water recycling and desalination, and authorizes new water recycling and reuse projects under the Title XVI program.
- Builds on the FAST Act commitment to further invest in the nation's freight network, both the surface transportation network and the water transportation network.
- Ensures that Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund spending levels are upheld to support the nation's ports, harbors, and waterways, and requires that 10% of annual funding be used for smaller commercial harbors.

Includes a one-year "Buy American" provision for FY 2017 to use American made iron and steel.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

New SEMCOG Video: *Developing Regional Solutions*

This promotional video showcases the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' (SEMCOG) role in creating a link between local governments throughout Southeast Michigan. This video is the first installment of a series that highlights SEMCOG communities in pursuit of regional goals. Upcoming videos will focus on making the region safe and accessible, collaborating for regional success, the value of SEMCOG membership, and what individuals can do to help solve regional issues.

Conference Note! Communications Director Peer Exchange & Energy and Environmental Director Peer Exchange

Join NARC for two different peer exchange groups during the 2016 National Conference of Regions in February! NARC intends for these meetings to initiate a network of peer-to-peer learning and best practice sharing.

For the Energy and Environment Group, the meeting will be our second convening of environmental and energy directors from regional COGs across the country, following our initial session at the Executive Directors Conference in South Bend. If you are interested in participating, please email Cameron Herbolsheimer (cameron@narc.org) with the proper contact for your organization.

For communications and public affairs directors, this will be the kick-off meeting for a NARC Communications Committee. We want this initial convening to spearhead future efforts and engagement among member communications and public affairs directors. If you are interested in participating, please email Anna Rosenbaum (anna@narc.org) with the proper contact for your organization.

MEMBER REQUEST

CDBG Success Stories

NARC has joined with the Community Development Block Grant Coalition to highlight the value of federal housing and community development programs to communities as the President-elect Trump Transition team develops policies on housing and community development. We are seeking information on CDBG projects that have made a significant contribution to your communities.

Do you have a success story to share? If so, please provide the following information from this [link](#) so we can include your successful project in our transition document. Please send responses to Anna Rosenbaum, anna@narc.org.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Environmental Sustainability Program Planners

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Lansing, MI

Executive Director

Northern Virginia Regional Commission, Fairfax

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Prepare Communities for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks Grant Program

Application Period Closes: February 10, 2017 at 11:59:59 PM ET

The grant application period for the FY16 Program to Prepare Communities for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks (CCTA Program) is currently open. The CCTA program provides \$35.94 million to state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions to improve their ability to prepare for, prevent, and respond to complex coordinated terrorist attacks in collaboration with the whole community. The FY 2016 CCTA Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (**NOFO**) is also located on the [Grants.gov website](#) Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 97.133. Send questions to FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Division at 202.646.3444 or FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Registration Open! 2017 National Conference of Regions

February 12-15 – Washington Court Hotel, 525 New Jersey Ave NW 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 soon. Capitol Hill Day is the final day of the conference, February 15, 2017.

CONTACT US

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