



FEDERAL UPDATE

Florida Association of Counties, January 2020

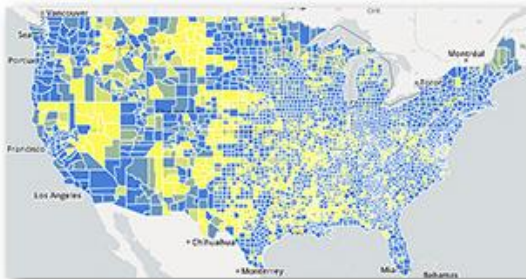
FAC's Federal Briefing

The FAC Federal Briefing is an informational newsletter to FAC members keeping you informed of FAC federal action and correspondence, NACo announcements and reports, White House correspondence and Washington, D.C. happenings and topics that may impact local governments.

To download a copy of FAC Federal Action Priorities, please [click here](#).

FAC in Action:

Broadband Data Act



On December 16, 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 4229 the Broadband DATA Act (Rep. Loeb sack, IA).

This bill requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to change the way broadband data is collected, verified, and reported.

FAC sent correspondence to Florida's Congressional members urging their support. FAC's members report that existing maps grossly overstate the availability and quality of broadband service that they experience in Florida's less populated areas. We join the numerous other entities that believe this inaccurate data has led to overbuilding in some places, while allowing other areas to remain unserved or underserved. Florida's problem is compounded because we lack a state-level broadband coordinating entity, such as those in other states that are responsible for supplementing Federal mapping efforts and pursuing funding opportunities. Though we continue to seek state support for broadband expansion, at the present time Florida's local leaders are working to fill the void while recognizing that progress is likely impossible without adequate mapping.

National Flood Insurance Program

President Trump Signs Re-authorization

NFIP reauthorization and reform continued to hit Congressional roadblocks during the last twelve months. While numerous bills were filed in both the House and Senate, only one bill eventually passed the House (H.R. 3167). While the bill had laudable provisions, FAC's position was the legislation did not do enough to help Florida's 1.7 million policy holders. Accordingly, FAC and the Florida League of Cities sent a joint letter to Florida's Congressional Delegation, listing their recommendations for comprehensive NFIP reform. To view the letter, please [click here](#).

The Senate did not act on H.R. 3167 and on December 20, 2019, the President signed legislation passed by Congress that extends the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP's) authorization to September 30, 2020, which reached his desk by way of the appropriations process.

FAC Contact:

If you have any questions please contact Eric Poole, Executive Director – Institute for County Government and FAC Federal Coordinator, epoole@fl-counties.com.

NFIP Flood Mapping – Risking Rating 2.0

Over the past two years, FEMA has been working on a revised process for rating a property's flood risk by incorporating multiple rating characteristics – like different types of floods, the distance a building is from the coast or another flooding source, or the cost to rebuild a home. The new process is called Risk Rating 2.0 and was set to roll out on April 1, 2020 for single family residential properties, with new rates going into effect on October 1, 2020.

Due to the uncertainty how the new approach would affect premiums and whether properties outside a FEMA-mapped flood zone would be required to purchase flood insurance, FAC met with members of the Florida Congressional delegation in August and urged them to ask FEMA to delay its implementation. On November 7, 2019, FEMA announced that it would delay the program for twelve months. However, it is still unclear whether the agency will welcome stakeholder input.

FAC Contact:

If you have any questions please contact Eric Poole, Executive Director – Institute for County Government and FAC Federal Coordinator, epoole@fl-counties.com.

Farm Workforce Modernization

FAC joined with NACo in support of H.R. 5038 Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2019 (Rep. Lofgren, CA-19). The success of Florida's agricultural economy is dependent on a stable workforce, and this important piece of legislation would provide needed resources and improvements to the system to ensure that a reliable farm workforce is available to meet the needs of the industry.



To review FAC's letter in support, please [click here](#).

By simplifying and modernizing the H-2A process, current farmworkers will have a path to obtain legal status and continue making vital contributions to the local, state, and national economies. These reforms are necessary to counter the existing farm labor shortage and to ensure that the nation maintains its place as a major agricultural producer.

Last action: 12/12/19. Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

FAC Contact:

If you have any questions contact Susan Harbin Alford, FAC Deputy Director of Public Policy, sharbin@fl-counties.com.

Healthcare Non-Convicted Justice-Involved Individual

FAC contacted Senator Rubio and Senator Scott urging their support for two pieces of legislation that would ease the impact of the Medicaid inmate exclusion on our local justice systems, S. 2628 the Equity in Pre-Trial Medicaid Coverage Act and S. 2626 Restoring Health Benefits for Justice-Involved Individuals Act of 2019. To download a copy of the letter from FAC sent, please [click here](#).

FAC membership voted to make Health Care for Non-Convicted Persons a priority and urges Congress to support the reinstatement of federal health care benefits, including those benefits awarded to veterans, for non-convicted justice-involved individuals.

READ MORE



News From NACo:

NACo Interim Policy Resolutions for 2020

Submit your policy resolutions by January 29!

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is accepting interim policy resolutions for their 2020 Legislative Conference. The deadline to submit your policy resolutions is **Wednesday, January 29**. As the third largest state, let your voices and Florida's issues be heard in Washington, D.C.!

All resolutions must be submitted electronically (preferably as a Word document) via email to resolutions@naco.org by Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2020. For complete details on NACo's policy process, [click here](#).

To register for the NACo Legislative Conference February 29-March 2 in Washington, D.C., please [click here](#).

NACo Thanks Members for a Year of Policy Accomplishments

In 2019, with your help, the National Association of Counties (NACo) achieved [several significant federal policy wins](#), including full funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program and a two-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools program; the full

repeal of the tax on employer-sponsored health benefits; staving off unfunded mandates and strengthening the federal-state-local intergovernmental partnership.

[Click here](#) for a summary and below for some highlights of what we accomplished together over the past year.

County Highlights in the FY 2020 Federal Spending Agreement

Nearly three months after the start of fiscal year (FY) 2020, congressional leaders were able to reach an agreement on a two-part spending deal that will fund the federal government through September 30, 2020. President Trump signed the two packages (H.R. 1865; H.R. 1158) totaling more than 2,300 pages and \$1.4 trillion, into law on December 20, 2019, averting a government shutdown and bringing an end to several months of short-term funding extensions and disagreements over spending levels and policy riders. [Click Here](#) to download NACo's comprehensive analysis.



White House Happenings: U.S. - China Trade Agreement



On Friday, December 13, 2019, President Trump announced that the United States has finalized the Phase One Trade Agreement with China.

The Agreement requires structural reforms to China's economic and trade regime in the areas of intellectual property, technology transfer, agriculture, financial services, and currency and foreign exchange.

The deal also includes a commitment by China to future purchases of U.S. goods and services, plus a strong dispute resolution system that ensures prompt and effective implementation and enforcement. While the United States will modify its tariff actions on China, 25% tariffs will remain on approximately \$250 billion of Chinese imports and 7.5% tariffs on approximately \$120 billion of Chinese imports.

You can find **Details of the Agreement** [here](#) and a pertinent **Fact Sheet** [here](#).

Proposed Rule to Modernize & Accelerate Environmental Reviews Under NEPA

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has released a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to update its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations for public comment. CEQ's NEPA regulations date back to 1978 and have not been comprehensively updated in over 40 years.

Over time, implementation of NEPA has become increasingly complex and time consuming for counties, cities, state and federal agencies, project applicants, and Americans seeking permits or approvals from the Federal government.

According to the Trump administration, the proposed rule seeks to reduce unnecessary paperwork and delays, and to promote better decision-making consistent with NEPA's statutory requirements. [Click here](#) to find out more about NEPA Modernization.

CEQ requests public comment on the NPRM. Comments should be submitted on or before March 10, 2020.



If you have any questions about FAC's Federal Program please contact Tiffany Henderson, FAC Sr. Public Policy Coordinator, thenderson@fl-counties.com.



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