



## Federal Committee

### Agenda

Thursday, September 18, 2025

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM

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- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Remarks
- III. Meeting Sponsor Recognition and Remarks
- IV. Meeting Overview
- V. Meeting Process
- VI. Review of Existing Policy Items
- VII. Review of NACo Resolutions (Florida)
- VIII. Federal Update
- IX. Other Business
- X. Adjournment





### **Federal Policy Committee**

Commissioner Kathryn Starkey, Pasco County, **Chair**  
Commissioner Marleine Bastien, Miami-Dade County, **Vice Chair**  
Commissioner Michael Kohler, Escambia County, **Vice Chair**

#### Policy Leaders:

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Commissioner Ken Doherty, Charlotte County  
Commissioner Rebecca Bays, Citrus County  
Commissioner Greg Hansen, Flagler County  
Commissioner Arlene Tuck, Highlands County  
Commissioner Harry Cohen, Hillsborough County  
Commissioner Sean Parks, Lake County  
Commissioner Brian Hamman, Lee County  
Commissioner Nick Maddox, Leon County  
Commissioner Tal Siddique, Manatee County  
Commissioner George Kruse, Manatee County  
Commissioner Craig Curry, Marion County  
Commissioner Rene Garcia, Miami-Dade County  
Commissioner Paul Mixon, Okaloosa County  
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Commissioner Peggy Choudhry, Osceola County  
Commissioner Maria Marino, Palm Beach County  
Commissioner Jack Mariano, Pasco County  
Commissioner Kathleen Peters, Pinellas County  
Commissioner Lee Constantine, Seminole County  
Commissioner Christian Whitehurst, St. Johns County  
Commissioner James Clasby, St. Lucie County





**Current FAC Federal Policies**  
**(as Adopted at November 2024 Legislative Conference)**

**WRDA BEACH RENOURISHMENT PROJECTS**

SUPPORTS (1) amending the next (2026) Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) to extend Section 1145 (d) of WRDA 2024 deadline for Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Project Implementation period by an additional 3 years and (2) clarify, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a project for hurricane and storm damage risk reduction, the provision of an adequate width of beach in public ownership for public use fronting private property shall be considered sufficient to meet the public use requirement for Federal participation in projects for shores presently in private ownership with acceptable access, parking areas, and other facilities necessary for public use.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: REVISE AND RETAIN**

**UPDATE:**

- This policy was adopted at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- WRDA must be renewed every two years in
- Bills
  - [S. 4367](#) Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act 2024
    - Became a law
    - Sec. 1145. Easements for hurricane and storm damage reduction projects.
- The Water Resource Development Act of 2024 ([H.R. 8812](#)) Passed the U.S House of Representatives on July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024, (375 - Y , 13 N) the bill has been received in the U.S Senate.
  - The bill includes: Sec. 146. Easements for Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Projects.





## **NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM (NFIP) REFORM**

SUPPORT reauthorization of the NFIP with legislative, policy, and programmatic modifications to ensure no coverage lapses and to improve the affordability, transparency, and financial stability of the program through reforms in the following areas: 1) Affordability/Rate Structure; 2) Mapping/Data Collection/Modeling; and 3) Mitigation.

OPPOSE any reauthorization efforts that are detrimental to policyholders, local governments, and the integrity of the program.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- Resolutions in 2024-2025 American County Platform: (See pages 197-199), Resolution on the Risk Rating 2.0 Implementation and National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization to Promote Transparency and Affordability.
- 2025 NACo Policy Brief: Urge your members of Congress to support legislation that will reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and ensure the program is accessible and affordable for all county residents. Current authorization ends on September 30, 2025.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- Through various resolutions and the 2023-2024 American County Platform: (see pages 188-189), NACo urges Congress to support the bipartisan National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization (NFIP-RE) Act ([H.R. 4349/S.2142](#)) that will reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and ensure it's accessible and affordable for all county residents."
- The current authorization ends on [September 30, 2024](#). The National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2023 extends NFIP for five years. It tackles issues such as protecting policyholders from extreme premium increases by capping annual increases at 9%, providing affordability measures for low-and middle-income policyholders, freezing interest payments on NFIP debt, and reinvesting savings towards cost-saving mitigation efforts. The bill reauthorizes the program through FY2026.
- Full implementation of Risk Rating 2.0 (RR2.0) on April 1, 2022, the implementation of RR2.0 increased 77% of policies nationwide.
- 2025 Bills
  - [S. 1015 \(H.R. 2822\)](#) To extend the National Flood Insurance Program through December 31, 2026. (Introduced)
  - [S. 824 \(H.R. 2123\)](#). NFIP Extension Act of 2025 (Introduced)
    - Extending the current NFIP program from September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- The NFIP-RE Act of 2023:
  - Caps NFIP premium increases at nine percent annually.

- Provides a comprehensive means-tested voucher for low- and middle-income homeowners and renters if their flood insurance premium becomes prohibitively expensive.
- Increases the maximum limit for Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC) coverage to assist policyholders in rebuilding and implementing mitigation projects to reduce costly repetitive flood losses. This coverage helps policyholders meet specific building requirements to reduce future flood damage before they repair or rebuild.
- Boost mitigation grant funding and modernize mapping to identify and reduce flood risks.
- Creates new oversight measures for insurance companies and vendors and gives FEMA greater authority to terminate contractors with a track record of abuse.
- Reforms the claims process based on lessons learned from Superstorm Sandy and other disasters to level the playing field for policyholders during appeal or litigation; holds FEMA accountable to strict deadlines so that homeowners get quick and fair payments; and bans aggressive legal tactics preventing homeowners from filing legitimate claims.



## **WATER (Water Resources Development Act)**

SUPPORT bi-annual passage of the Water Resources Development Act that authorizes U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects and policies that often have state-wide impacts on Florida, including Everglades' restoration, port and inlet construction, and beach nourishment projects.

SUPPORT restoration of congressionally directed spending.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- The Water Resource Development Act of 2024 (H.R. 8812) Passed the U.S House of Representatives on July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024, (375 - Y , 13 N) the bill has been received in the U.S Senate.
- NACo's 2024-2025 American County Platform: "NACo supports federal matching funds for local governments to plan for and implement projects that reduce flood-damage risks and accomplish other goals under the Water Resources Development Act. NACo urges Congress to appropriate the funds needed. (page 66)

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- The Water Resources Development Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-263; H.R. 7776; specifically, Title LXXXI of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023) passed the U.S. House of Representatives on December 8, 2022, and the U.S. Senate on December 15, 2022. The President signed the bill into law on December 23, 2022.
- A new WRDA is developed every two years to respond to local water resource needs and to ensure continued Congressional oversight over the Corps. Congress has enacted five consecutive WRDA bills in 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022, 2024 and the next WRDA bill is expected to be enacted in 2026.





## **UPPER KISSIMMEE BASIN WATER STORAGE PROJECTS**

SUPPORT the inclusion of funding in the Water Resources Development ACT (WRDA) for studies and implementation of water storage projects within the Upper Kissimmee Basin to reduce harmful discharges, enhance central Florida water supply, and mitigate negative economic impacts on communities surrounding Lake Okeechobee.

SUPPORT including the following language in the next WRDA bill: The Secretary is authorized to conduct a feasibility study for the following - Expanding the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Program to the fullest extent of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP), to include the Upper Kissimmee Basin and the headwaters of the Kissimmee River at the Shingle Creek tributary.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **CURRENT UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 Legislative Conference.
- 2025 Project Update:
  - Shingle Creek, Lake Tohopekaliga, and Kissimmee River Feasibility Study
  - Overall project: \$6,000,000
  - Federal Share: \$3,000,000
  - Local Sponsor: Osceola County
  - Impact: This study will identify long-term solutions for invasive plant control, ecosystem restoration, and flood risk management in Shingle Creek, Lake Tohopekaliga, and the Kissimmee River. These waterways are critical to the health of the Everglades watershed.
    - Project Background: The Shingle Creek, Lake Tohopekaliga, and Kissimmee River Feasibility Study is a \$6 million, partially federally funded, US Army Corps of Engineers study to address invasive plant control, ecosystem restoration, and flood risk management across critical waterways in Osceola County. The Study was authorized in Section 201(a)(5) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-260) as modified by Section 8201(b)(2) of Water Resources Development Act of 2022 (P.L.117-263). Osceola County is the local sponsor and is requesting continued FY2027 funding to support the study, which requires a 50% local match. This multi-year study recently started in May 2025, taking a holistic approach to improving the Shingle Creek and Kissimmee River Basins, including Lake Tohopekaliga. These waterways are vital to the Everglades watershed, serving as its northernmost headwaters. Increased urbanization over the past 50 years has disrupted natural ecosystems, constrained water flow, and exacerbated flooding. Vegetative overgrowth within Lake Tohopekaliga has resulted in decreased flood conveyance. Hurricane Ian in 2022 caused extensive flooding in the Shingle Creek watershed, displacing thousands of residents and flooding over 1,700 structures. This study focuses on improving flood risk management and restoring ecosystems by identifying structural improvements, such as new control structures, and non-structural



changes, including a program to allow for drawdowns. These actions will also improve navigation, recreation, and environmental quality for both communities in the region and the State of Florida. Costs associated with this study recently increased from \$3M to \$6M. By completing this study, the region will identify long-term solutions to manage flooding, restore ecosystems, and ensure the sustainability of these vital waterways.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- As approved on December 23, 2022, P.L. 117-263, Title LXXXI, Water Resources Development Act of 2022, includes section 8202(a), relating to expedited completion of feasibility studies, and provides for the expedited completion of the feasibility study and, if justified in a completed report, to proceed with the preconstruction planning, engineering, and design of the project: "... (6) Project for ecosystem restoration, Lake Okeechobee, Florida, [and] (7) Project for ecosystem restoration, Western Everglades, Florida ..."
- Section 8214(a) of P.L. 117-263 authorizes the Secretary of the Army to "carry out a feasibility study for resiliency and comprehensive improvements or modifications to existing water resources development projects in the central and southern Florida area, for purposes of flood risk management, water supply, ecosystem restoration (including preventing saltwater intrusion), recreation, and related purposes."
- Section 8215(b) of P.L. 117-263 mandates that the Secretary, in cooperation with non-federal sponsors of the Central and Southern Florida project, along with relevant federal, state and tribal agencies, develop a comprehensive plan to restore, preserve, and protect Florida's northern estuaries, which are defined section 8215(a)(2) to mean "the Caloosahatchee Estuary, Charlotte Harbor, Indian River Lagoon, Lake Worth Lagoon, and St. Lucie River Estuary." The comprehensive plan must be submitted to Congress by December 15, 2025, along with recommendations for future studies of the northern estuaries.
- Section 8216 of P.L. 117-263 authorizes the Secretary to carry out a study and provide a report to specified Congressional committees on projects and activities carried out through the Engineer Research and Development Center to restore shellfish habitat and seagrass in coastal estuaries in the Florida Central Gulf Coast.
- To date, there's been no legislation filed in Congress associated with this policy.



## **DISASTER RECOVERY & PREPAREDNESS**

SUPPORT increased investment in mitigation programs such as the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, and other partnerships between local and federal governments to complete mitigation projects and increase disaster resiliency.

SUPPORT measures that ensure any supplemental disaster recovery assistance appropriated by Congress, including the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Relief (CDBG-DR), is expedited to states to be made available to disaster-impacted counties.

OPPOSE programmatic changes that would increase the local cost share for disaster recovery, such as the implementation of a disaster deductible.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was revised and retained at the FAC 2024 Legislative Conference.
- 2025-2026 NACo FEMA update – Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) act. Full analysis can be found [here](#).
  - On July 24, the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chair Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) released the bipartisan Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act ([H.R.4669](#)), to dramatically overhaul the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). NACo provided actionable recommendations to T&I majority and minority staff throughout the drafting process and are proud to see many of these items represented in the final text. Following the bill's introduction, NACo sent a letter to T&I leadership expressing support for the legislation and outlining how its provisions would strengthen emergency response and recovery efforts for counties across the nation.
  - Key provisions in the FEMA Act that will have a transformative impact on county disaster response and recovery:
    - Universal Disaster Application: This will simplify and unify survivor applications across federal agencies, reducing confusion, duplication and delays for disaster survivors during the most stressful times of their lives.
    - Public Assistance Program Reform: Transitioning from a reimbursement-based model to a grant-based model for FEMA Public Assistance will ensure counties – many of which operate on tight budgets – can more quickly restore vital infrastructure without needing to front millions of dollars.
    - Public Assistance Dashboard: Increased transparency and visibility into the status of project approvals, obligations and disbursements will help counties plan better, hold partners accountable and identify bottlenecks.
    - Mitigation Program Reforms: Modernizing FEMA's mitigation programs will allow counties to proactively address vulnerabilities before the next disaster strikes, better protecting lives, property and taxpayer dollars.
- Resolution in NACo's 2024-2025 American County Platform:



- NACo urges FEMA to examine the building code requirements in the BRIC application process and provide alternative scoring opportunities for counties that cannot meet these requirements due to state-level restrictions. (Page 188)

**RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- See 2022 Congressional Service Report – *Recent Funding Increases for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance*: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11733>



## **OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING**

SUPPORT keeping Florida's east coast free from off-shore drilling and OPPOSE inclusion of Florida from offshore leasing in the proposed National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was revised and retained at the FAC 2024 Legislative Conference.
- Resolution in NACo's 2025-2026 American County Platform: "The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Administration to finalize and adopt the 11th National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program and to hold regular offshore lease sales including all 27 proposed planning areas, to maximize the funding streams of the royalty revenue for the purposes of conservation, recreation, restoration and protection of vital national resources except those areas covered by the GOMESA moratorium (as further extended by Presidential action on September 8, 2020) covering portions of the Central Gulf planning area and areas in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico. Additionally, urge Congress to take steps to codify annual lease sales in the Gulf of America with streamlined permitting."
- Resolution in NACo's 2024-2025 American County Platform: "The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Administration to hold all three offshore lease sales in the 2024 – 2029 OCS Leasing Program and to hold regular offshore lease sales to maximize the funding streams of the royalty revenue for the purpose of conservation, recreation, restoration, and protection of vital national resources. And, in the absence of expedited lease sales by the administration. NACo urges Congress to immediately pass legislation instructing the administration to hold multiple region-wide, commercially viable offshore and onshore lease sales each year, excluding those areas covered by the GOMESA moratorium as further extended by presidential Actions on September 8, 2020, covering portions of the Central Gulf planning area and areas in the Easter Gulf of Mexico including Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia."

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- The GOMESA Moratorium:
  - The Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA) banned oil and gas leasing within 125 miles off the Florida Coastline in the Eastern Planning Area, a portion of the Central Planning Area, until June 30, 2022.
  - After the expiration date, the Department of Interior began plans for offshore leasing in the moratorium area.
  - In 2019, the House passed H.R. 205, Protecting and Securing Florida's Coastline Act of 2019, to permanently extend the moratorium on oil and gas leasing and related activities in some regions of the Gulf of Mexico near the coast of Florida. See CRS Report: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46195>
- Extended Moratorium
  - Although the GOMESA moratorium has expired, this area was additionally withdrawn from leasing beginning July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2032, by the Trump Administration, using authority under Section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Land Act (OCSLA) (43 U.S.C. §1341(a)).

- The [GOMESA Moratorium](#) covers a portion of the Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (CPA) and, until June 30, 2022, most of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico Planning Area (EPA). The specific locations restricted from leasing activities include that portion of the Eastern Planning Area within 125 miles of Florida, all areas in the Gulf of Mexico east of the Military Mission Line (86° 41' west longitude), and the area within the Central Planning Area that is within 100 miles of Florida.
- U.S. Department of Interior: <https://www.boem.gov/oil-gas-energy/energy-economics/gulf-mexico-energy-security-act-gomesa>
- The Biden administration proposed a five-year offshore oil and gas leasing program, which opened for a 90-day public comment period on July 1, 2022. The proposed program may be accessed at: [https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/oil-gas-energy/national-program/2023-2028\\_Proposed%20Program\\_July2022.pdf](https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/oil-gas-energy/national-program/2023-2028_Proposed%20Program_July2022.pdf)
- The proposal lists out lease options, including one sale in the Straits of Florida Program Area or no sales within the Straits of Florida Program Area.
- The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) reinstates an oil and gas lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico. It requires the U.S. Department of Interior to conduct three additional lease sales: 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Program.
- At the 2023 NACo Annual Conference, Florida commissioners provided an amendment to the “Proposed Resolution in Support of the Completion of a New Five-Year Plan and the Resuming Federal Onshore and Offshore Leasing” to protect Florida’s offshore waters by:
  - Excluding those areas covered by the GOMESA moratorium [as further extended by presidential action on September 8, 2020], covering portions of the Central Gulf planning area and areas in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico.



## **FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS**

SUPPORT the continuation of adequate funding of critical programs that provide resources for the provision of local services and local public infrastructure. These funding programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funds – Everglades’ restoration, port & inlet construction, maintenance, and beach nourishment (USACOE)
- Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG)
- Community Services Block Grant program (CSBG)
- Social Services Block Grant program (SSBG)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This Policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2025 was signed into law on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
  - This act provides FY2025 (H.R. 1968) appropriations for several federal departments and agencies. It also extends several expiring programs and authorities.
  - Specifically, the act includes 6 of the 12 regular FY2024 appropriations bills:
    - the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025;
    - the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025;
    - the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025;
    - the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025;
    - the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025; and
    - the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025.
- The proposed FY 2025-2026 Congressional appropriations for the above programs are as follows:

USACOE – FY 2026: United States Army Corps of Engineers

- H.R. 4553 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026
  - USACOE – FY 2026: \$8.695 Billion (\$2.555B for Construction, \$6.14B for Operation and Maintenance)

CDBG – FY 2026: Community Development Block Grant

- S. 2465 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026
  - CDBG – FY 2026: \$3.1 Billion
- H.R. 4553 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 202Y
  - CDBG – FY 2026: \$3.3 Billion



CSBG - FY 2026: Community Service Block Grant

- [S. 2587](#) Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026
  - Carryover from the previous year

SSBG – FY 2026: Social Service Block Grant

- [S. 2587](#) Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025
  - SSBG- FY 2026: 1.7 Billion

EDA – FY 2026: Economic Development Administration

- [S. 2354](#) Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act 2025
  - EDA – FY 2026: 360 Million



## VETERANS

SUPPORT legislation requiring the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide case management support to local housing authorities under the VA-supported housing program.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This Policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- Resolution in NACo’s 2024-2025 American County Platform: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Congress to reinstate and adequately fund the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase (VASP) program, or a similar support program, to address the costs of inflation, a national shortage of affordable housing and assist veterans who may be on a low or fixed income.
- Resolution in NACo’s 2024-2025 American County Platform: “Initiative to End Veterans Homelessness”: NACo Supports the goal of ending homelessness among veterans and military families, including using temporary assistance and shelter resources to assist with permanent housing placement. NACo strongly recommends the continued appropriation of resources through the Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grant program, and the Grants and Per Diem program to accomplish this goal. (Page 35)
- 2024-2025 Bills
  - H.R. 1957 – End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2025 (Introduced)
    - This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to furnish case management to certain veterans who are eligible for the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the VA.
    - Specifically, the VA must furnish case management to veterans who are eligible for HUD-VASH that the VA determines require case management. The VA must prioritize vulnerable homeless veterans in assigning case managers and providing services.
    - The VA must take certain actions if a veteran refuses case management. HUD or a public housing authority may not revoke assistance solely on the basis that a veteran has refused case management. Additionally, a veteran may not be evicted or penalized by the owner of a property solely on the basis that they have refused case management or cannot be provided case management for health and safety reasons.
    - The Government Accountability Office must report to Congress on veterans who are served by the HUD-VASH program, case managers and case management services provided under the program, and metrics about housing stability for veterans participating in federal housing assistance programs.
    - The bill also provides statutory authority to expand eligibility for the HUD-VASH program to any veteran who is homeless, at risk of homelessness, or receiving assistance under another housing assistance program if the



VA determines a voucher under HUD-VASH is more appropriate. (Currently, assistance is statutorily limited to certain veterans who have chronic mental illness or substance use disorders.)

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- 2023-2024 Bills:
  - S.290 – Preserving Our Commitment to Homeless Veterans Act (Introduced)
    - This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide case management support to local housing authorities under the VA-supported housing program. The program assists veterans who are homeless and their families in finding and sustaining permanent housing.
  - H.R. 3848 – Housing Our Military Veterans Effectively Act of 2023 (Passed House – Received in Senate read twice and referred out to the Committee of Veterans Affairs)
    - This bill addresses the funding and administration of certain Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs related to homeless veterans.
    - Specifically, the bill increases the maximum rate of per diem payments provided by the VA to entities (i.e., grant recipients or authorized entities) that furnish services and transitional housing to homeless veterans. The bill also authorizes the VA to provide a maximum of 200% of the otherwise applicable maximum rate to a certain number of grant recipients and authorized entities in each fiscal year from FY2024 through FY2026. Under the bill, the VA may not provide more than 12,000 per diem payments in a fiscal year.
    - Through FY2024, the bill authorizes the VA to use certain available funds to provide specified assistance to homeless veterans who are participating in the Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program. Such assistance may include food, shelter, clothing, transportation for specified purposes, and technology items such as smartphones.
    - The bill authorizes the VA to collaborate with organizations to manage the use of VA land for homeless veterans to live and sleep.
    - The bill also extends certain loan fee rates through May 18, 2032, under the VA's home loan program.



## **HEALTH CARE FOR NON-CONVICTED PERSONS**

SUPPORT the reinstatement of federal health care benefits, including those benefits awarded to veterans, for non-convicted justice-involved individuals.

Proposed Modified Statement: SUPPORT the reinstatement of federal health care benefits for non-convicted justice-involved individuals, including:

- Benefits awarded to veterans.
- Services for patients in an inpatient mental health or substance use disorder treatment facility with more than 16 beds and to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for said services.
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for all mental health and psychiatric care services.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- Resolution in NACo's 2024-2025 American County Platform: "Resolution to Amend the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy in the Federal Social Security Act" - urges Congress to amend the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy in the Social Security Act, allowing pre-trial detainees to access Medicaid services while awaiting trial. (Page 133)
- 2024-2025 Bills:
  - H.R. 1510 (S.1720) - Due Process Continuity of Care (Introduced)
    - This bill allows an otherwise eligible individual who is in custody pending disposition of charges (i.e., pretrial detainees) to receive Medicaid benefits at the option of the state. The bill also provides for state planning grants to support the provision of such benefits.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- 2023-2024 Bills:
  - S. 971 – Due Process Continuity of Care (Introduced)
    - This bill allows an otherwise eligible individual who is in custody pending disposition of charges (i.e., pretrial detainees) to receive Medicaid benefits at the option of the state. The bill also provides for state planning grants to support such benefits.
  - H.R 3074 – Due Process Continuity of Care (Introduced)
    - This bill allows an otherwise eligible individual who is in custody pending disposition of charges (i.e., pretrial detainees) to receive Medicaid benefits at the option of the state. The bill also provides for state planning grants to support the provision of such benefits.
  - S.1165 – Reentry Act of 2023 (Introduced)
    - This bill allows for Medicaid payment of medical services furnished to an incarcerated individual during the 30 days preceding the individual's release. The Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Payment and Access Commission must report on specified information

relating to the accessibility and quality of health care for incarcerated individuals, including the impact of the bill's changes.

- H.R. 2400 – Reentry Act of 2023 (Introduced)
  - This bill allows for Medicaid payment of medical services furnished to an incarcerated individual during the 30 days preceding the individual's release. The Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Payment and Access Commission must report on specified information relating to the accessibility and quality of health care for incarcerated individuals, including the impact of the bill's changes.
- NACO Letter to Senate Finance Committee on Behavioral Health Policy: <https://www.naco.org/news/naco-commission-mental-health-sends-letter-congress>
- NACo and NSA Joint Task Force Report recommends amending Section 1905(a)(A) of the Social Security Act to allow for the continuation of federal benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, and Children's Health Insurance Plan for pre-trial detainees: <https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/naco-nsa-joint-task-force-report-addressing-federal-medicaid-inmate-exclusion-policy>.
- FAC's HSJ Guiding Principle #47: The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that provide Medicaid eligibility for persons incarcerated in county jails while waiting for the disposition of their cases and to ensure that existing Medicaid benefits are not terminated during incarceration.

## **NON-DOMESTIC SAND SOURCES**

SUPPORT enabling the Secretary of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to allow counties to acquire sand by purchase, exchange, or otherwise from non-domestic sources for the purpose of beach renourishment.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- Resolution in NACo's 2022-2023 American County Platform: Resolution Supporting Affordable Beach Renourishment Projects "Allowing local governments to purchase sand from countries outside of the U.S. to replenish shoreline due to beach erosion." The policy allows the Secretary of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to allow counties to acquire sand by purchase, exchange, or otherwise from non-domestic sources for the purpose of beach renourishment.
- Since 1956, the U.S. Army Corps has been authorized to carry out beach nourishment for shoreline protection. The Corps has participated in approx. 350 miles of shoreline, including on the Gulf coasts.
- The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports the SAND Act of 2023 (S. 47). This bill allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to acquire fill material for beach erosion and nourishment purposes from non-domestic sources even if such materials are available from domestic sources.
- S. 47 – 118<sup>th</sup> Congress: Sand Acquisition, Nourishment, and Development Act of 2023
  - This bill allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to acquire fill material for beach erosion and nourishment purposes from non-domestic sources, even if such materials are available from domestic sources.
  - Introduced to the Senate
    - 01/24/2023: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.
- H.R. 3410 – 118<sup>th</sup> Congress: SAND Act
  - This bill allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to acquire fill material for beach erosion and nourishment purposes from non-domestic sources even if such materials are available from domestic sources.
  - Introduced in the House
    - 05/18/2023: Referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.





## **COVID-19 FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

SUPPORT the continuation and flexibility for state and local governments to assist with critical local response efforts and services from the COVID-19 pandemic through recovery funds.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: NOT RETAIN**

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- This policy was revised and retained at the 2024 Legislative Conference.
- On December 23, 2022, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, P.L. 117-328 (December 29, 2022), which included an amendment offered by Senators Padilla and Cornyn to provide flexibility in the use of funds made available to local governments through the American Rescue Plan Act's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) in transportation and infrastructure, disaster relief, and community development.
- On August 10, 2023, the U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury) released an Interim Final Rule (IFR) implementing the bipartisan [State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Fiscal Recovery, Infrastructure, and Disaster Relief Flexibility Act](https://www.treasury.gov/press-releases/2023/0810) (i.e., Cornyn/Padilla Amendment). See <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Overview-of-the-2023-Interim-Final-Rule.pdf>.
- NACo's recorded membership call and its analysis of the IFR analysis may be accessed at: <https://www.naco.org/events/national-membership-call-overview-us-treasury-new-guidance-arpa-flexibility>.
- To date, there's been no legislation filed in Congress associated with this policy.





## **LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDIT**

SUPPORT legislation expanding the 4% and 9% tax credits of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program to encourage more private development of affordable housing units.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- 2024-2025 NACo County Platform – Continuing Support
  - NACo continues to support permanent status of the Low- Income Housing Tax Credit. The credit accounts for many of the new apartments constructed in the United States, and virtually all of the apartments constructed or rehabilitated for low-income renters. Permanent status of this tax credit must be maintained so that potential investors will not be discouraged from making investments and housing providers can make appropriate planning and administrative decisions.
  - NACo is very concerned that any future proposal to eliminate the double taxation of corporate dividends through an “excludable dividend amount” would have an adverse impact on tax-exempt bonds and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- Resolution in NACo’s 2023-2024 American County Platform: The National Association of Counties (NACo) encourages Congress to pass the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (AHCIA) of 2023 to expand and preserve the nation’s affordable housing stock.
- The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is a federal affordable housing program established under 26 U.S.C. §42. Unlike traditional affordable housing programs, the LIHTC program excludes rental assistance or direct government expenditure. Instead, private investors fund a portion of project costs in exchange for a tax credit claimed over 10 years. There are two types of tax credits: 4% and 9% credits.
- The Florida Housing Finance Corporation administers the Low-Income Tax Credit program in Florida. The competitive (9%) and non-competitive (4%) Housing Credits program provides nonprofit and for-profit developers with federal tax credits.
- In its 2021 Annual Report, the FHFC summarizes the program’s activities as follows:
  - \$69,304,672 in competitive (9%) housing credits was allocated in 2021. 3,682 units were funded (3,583 units will be set aside as affordable).
  - \$57,430,143 in non-competitive (4%) housing credits was allocated in 2021. A total of 6,004 units were funded (6,004 units will be set aside as affordable).
- <https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/what-low-income-housing-tax-credit-and-how-does-it-work>
- In its 2022 Annual Report, the FHFC summarizes the program’s activities as follows:
  - \$71,890,999 in competitive (9%) housing credit was allocated. 4,860 units were funded (4,805 units will be set aside as affordable)
  - \$86,228,893 in non-competitive (4%) housing credit was allocated. 7,550 units were funded (7,064 units will be set aside as affordable)
- In its 2023 Annual Report, the FHFC summarizes the program’s activities as follows:



- \$86,014,937 in competitive (9%) housing credit was allocated. 3,325 units were funded (3,144 units will be set aside as affordable)
- \$154,465,116 in non-competitive (4%) housing credit was allocated. 11,168 units were funded (10,932 units will be set aside as affordable)

## **CORAL REEFS**

SUPPORT the State of Florida delegation working with the State of Hawaii delegation and other delegations represented on the U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee and NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program to hold a Congressional hearing on the status, trends, and urgent issues facing the U.S.'s coral reefs. SUPPORT reauthorization of the Coral Reef Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2000 and additional recurring funding dedicated to improving the health of the nation's coral reefs. Also, recommended that NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration), in coordination with the states and territories, update the economic value of coral reefs for each region and establish a regular update schedule for these studies.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- H.R. 6738 – Coral Reef Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2020 (Introduced in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress). This bill sets forth requirements concerning the conservation and restoration of coral reef ecosystems, including reauthorizing through FY2025 and expanding the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, reauthorizing through FY2025 the Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology program, and establishing the Coral Reef Ecosystem Studies Program. The bill was introduced in the House on May 8, 2020, and referred to the Committee on Natural Resources and Science, Space and Technology Committee. On May 21, 2020, the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife.
- S. 119 –South Florida Ecosystem Enhancements Act of 2023 (118<sup>th</sup> Congress 2023-2024)
  - Introduced in the Senate on January 26, 2023, and referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.
  - This bill provides support for ecosystems in South Florida. Under the bill, *South Florida* means (1) land and water within the administrative boundaries of the South Florida Water Management District and contiguous near-shore coastal waters, including the Florida Keys; and (2) Florida's Coral Reef, and the associated patch reef, hard-bottom, and seagrass resources.
- H.R. 628 South Florida Ecosystem Enhancements Act of 2023 (118<sup>th</sup> Congress 2023-2024)
  - Introduced in the House on January 30, 2023, and referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.
  - This bill provides support for ecosystems in South Florida. Under the bill, *South Florida* means (1) land and water within the administrative boundaries of the South Florida Water Management District and contiguous near-shore coastal waters, including the Florida Keys; and (2) Florida's Coral Reef, and the associated patch reef, hard-bottom, and seagrass resources.
- H.R. 7973 – To direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a grant program to support the restoration of coral reefs in South Florida.
  - Introduced in the House on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources





## **HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS (SECTION 8) PORTABILITY**

SUPPORT legislation to reform the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program's mobility feature by eliminating the negative fiscal impact to an initial Public Housing Agency (i.e., the PHA that initially issued the HCV to a family) that results when a voucher family moves to a high-cost area and the receiving PHA bills the initial PHA to administer the voucher instead of absorbing the moving family into its (i.e., the receiving PHA) program.

SUPPORT legislation requiring counties to assist residents first, before assisting non-residents from outside the county.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: REVISE AND RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is authorized by section 8(o) of the 1937 Act (42 U.S.C. §1473f(o)), as amended, and the HCV program regulations are found in 24 CFR part 982. Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by Public Housing Agencies (PHAs).
- Under HUD regulations (24 CFR 960.206 for public housing and 24 CFR 982.207 for Housing Choice Vouchers), Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) are allowed to establish local preferences for admission to their programs. This includes giving preference to applicants who live, work, or have been hired to work in the jurisdiction.
  - However:
    - The preference must be formally adopted in the PHA's Administrative Plan or Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP).
    - It cannot be discriminatory (must comply with Fair Housing Act and Civil Rights laws).
    - A residency preference cannot exclude applicants outside the area entirely — PHAs must still allow non-residents to apply and must serve them if they reach the top of the list, though local residents may be moved ahead.
    - HUD requires that preferences be applied in a way that does not create an unreasonable barrier for non-local applicants, particularly those needing to move for employment or safety reasons.
- To date, there's been no legislation filed in Congress associated with this policy.



## **OPPORTUNITY ZONES**

SUPPORT legislation allowing county governments to select additional eligible census tracts within the limits of their boundaries to be designated as opportunity zones when an existing opportunity zone does not attract investment or is subject to documented insufficient investment.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: NOT RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- 2025 Update –
  - H.R.1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act
    - Eliminated the previous sunset date of December 31, 2026.
    - Requires governors to re-designate Opportunity Zones every 10 years, ensuring that the program targets the most economically distressed areas.
    - Implements new reporting requirements, allowing for better tracking and accountability of investments in Opportunity Zones

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- The Opportunity Zone Program fosters economic development and job creation in economically distressed communities. According to the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council, 52 million Americans live in economically distressed communities, including 35 million who reside in Opportunity Zones. A lack of investment has contributed to this economic distress, and the lack of access to economic opportunity can result in high unemployment rates, stagnant wages, low graduation rates, unsafe neighborhoods, and shorter life expectancy.
- Qualified Opportunity Zones were introduced in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (Act) to assist these distressed communities in 2017. A total of 427 Qualified Opportunity Zones are designated in Florida and located in every county in the state, stretching from the Panhandle through the Florida Keys. DEO The Opportunity Zone Program: <https://www.floridajobs.org/business-growth-and-partnerships/for-businesses-and-entrepreneurs/business-resource/opportunity-zones>
- Financial benefits: Taxes are deferred on capital gains rolled into Qualified Opportunity Zone Funds and the original tax bill through December 31, 2026, or the sale of the Opportunity Zone investment, whichever is earlier.
- October 2021: Opportunity Zones: Census Tract Designations, Investment Activities, and IRS Challenges Ensuring Taxpayer Compliance Congressional Report: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104019.pdf>
- To date, there's been no bill filed in Congress associated with this policy.



## **IMMIGRATION**

SUPPORT federal legislation that establishes a secure border but ensures a reasonable and workable process for individuals who desire to better their economic prosperity to apply to come and work in the US, especially those in the agricultural and hospitality industries.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was retained at the 2023 FAC Legislative Conference.
- Resolution in NACo's 2024-2025 American County Platform: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to develop legislation that creates a fair, efficient, and humane legal pathway for non-U.S. citizens to obtain work authorization, while protecting worker rights and ensuring labor standards.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- Resolution in NACo's 2023-2024 American County Platform: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the administration to enact legislative and regulatory proposals that support and provide improved and efficient legal avenues for immigrants to enter the United States, both permanently and temporarily, and contribute to the workforce and local economies and maintain the area standard industry wages for the local marketplace.
- President Biden has issued many Executive Actions on Immigration. To view the President's actions: <https://cmsny.org/biden-immigration-executive-actions/>
- The Biden Administration's immigration priorities are found within [H.R. 3194](#), the "U.S. Citizenship Act." The bill was introduced in the House on May 23, 2023. It has been referred to 12 separate committees, none of which have held hearings on the bill.
- The purpose of the bill is to provide an earned path to citizenship, address the root causes of migration and responsibly manage the southern border, to reform the immigrant visa system, address immigration court processes and proceedings, addressing employment authorization and worker protections, and for other purposes.
- Similar legislation (H.R. 1177) was filed in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. To view a fact sheet, see: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/20/fact-sheet-president-biden-sends-immigration-bill-to-congress-as-part-of-his-commitment-to-modernize-our-immigration-system/>
- In his budget proposal to Congress, President Biden proposed increasing funding levels for immigration-related purposes, including:
  - Enhances border security and Immigration Enforcement
    - \$25.9 billion for U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
    - \$127 million for border security technology
    - \$169 million to combat Fentanyl.
  - Supports a Fair, Orderly, and Humane Immigration System
    - \$865 million for United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
  - Addresses the Situation at the Southwest Border

- \$4.3 billion contingency fund to aid the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
  - Improves Immigration Court
    - \$981 million in the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)
  - Supports America’s Promise to Refugees
    - \$9.3 billion to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (OOR)
  - Creates Opportunities in Central America and Haiti
    - Request \$1 billion to advance the President’s Commitment to work with Congress to provide \$4 billion over four years
  - Bolsters Hemispheric Economic Investment and Migration Management Efforts
    - \$35 million for hemispheric migration management
- 
- To view the full fact sheet, please visit <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/03/11/fact-sheet-the-presidents-budget-secures-our-border-combats-fentanyl-trafficking-and-calls-on-congress-to-enact-critical-immigration-reform/>
  - To view the most recent fact sheet of President Bidens announcement to secure the border, please visit <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/06/04/fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-new-actions-to-secure-the-border/>



## **TRUCK WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS**

OPPOSE legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight limits beyond those in current federal law due to safety concerns and potential impacts on local roads.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was adopted at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- 2025-2026 NACo County Platform – Continuing Support
  - NACo believes adequate federal funding should be provided to compensate state and local governments for any infrastructure upgrades necessary to accommodate the vehicle size, weight, and configurations mandated by Congress. NACo opposes any increases in truck size or weight until Congress requires a full impact analysis that any increases may have on the national transportation system, including the added cost on state and local governments. NACo supports full funding of these impacts by Congress and expects Congress to fund any additional impacts suffered by local infrastructure in Congress’ performing of the analysis
  - NACo also supports the continued requirement that all trucks have override protection devices and believes that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration should periodically review the adequacy of such regulations.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- A similar proposal, *truck weight size*, was adopted in 2016-2017. FAC Legislative Program: Due to safety concerns and potential impacts on local roads, FAC OPPOSES legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight limits beyond those in current federal law.
- Under NACo’s Statement of Basic Philosophy under Transportation, there is a section on “Trucks and Vehicle Size and Weights (2024-2025) NACo American County Platform):”NACo believes adequate federal funding should be provided to compensate state and local governments for any infrastructure upgrades necessary to accommodate the vehicle size, weight, and configurations mandated by Congress. NACo opposes any increases in truck size or weight until Congress requires a full impact analysis that any increases may have on the national transportation system, including the added cost on state and local governments. NACo supports full funding of these impacts by Congress and expects Congress to fund any additional impacts suffered by local infrastructure in Congress’ performing of the analysis. NACo also supports the continued requirement that all trucks have override protection devices and believes that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration should periodically review the adequacy of such regulations. (Page 227)





## **ARPA FUNDING RECOUPMENT**

SUPPORT legislation to prohibit the U.S. Department of Treasury from recouping previously awarded funds for projects and services that have been certified as complete for at least three years, which will be 2029.

SUPPORT the implementation of a statute of limitations for the remediation and recoupment of funds directly allocated to Counties under the American Rescue Act.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was adopted at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- There's no legislation filed in Congress associated with this policy.





## **REAUTHORIZATION OF WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT**

SUPPORT reauthorization of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the continuation of adequate funding of critical programs that provide resources for the provision of local workforce programs;

OPPOSE redefining local workforce development board member participation to increase the percentage of union representation due to the shortfall of union representation in the state.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was adopted at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- 2025 NACo Policy Brief: Urge your members of Congress to support increased funding for Title I programs under the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Funded through the Labor, Health and Human Services (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill, WIOA programs provide essential financial and other resources to support a demand-driven workforce development system.
  - Enacted with bipartisan support in 2014, WIOA authorizes federal employment, workforce and training programs and formula funding to states and local governments. WIOA provides the needed framework for a modernized, demand-driven workforce development system to meet business and job seekers' needs. The bipartisan *Stronger Workforce for America Act*, a bill that would have reauthorized WIOA and made several significant changes to the program, passed the U.S. House of Representatives in April 2024, but failed to receive a vote in the U.S. Senate before the end of the 118th Congress. Among other changes to the program, the bill would have required 50% of Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to be spent on training, increased the amount of funds a governor can retain to 25% and created a redesignation process that could have eliminated local workforce boards in states with a population over 5.1 million.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

- Resolution in NACo's 2023-2024 American County Platform: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the reauthorization of, and increased funding for, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). NACo further recommends that within the Act, Congress provides greater flexibility to the private-sector-led Workforce Development Boards and eliminates bureaucratic burdens.
- H.R. 699 – 118<sup>th</sup> Congress: To amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to authorize a study to review specific outcomes of entrepreneurial skills development programs and other purposes.
  - This bill requires states to incorporate into their career services programs (1) information about entrepreneurship and (2) referrals to microenterprise services. It also requires the Department of Labor to conduct a multistate study of entrepreneurial skills development programs and review successful practices for developing such skills.



- Introduced to the House
  - 02/01/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- H.R. 3804 – 118<sup>TH</sup> Congress: Workforce and Education Partnership Act of 2023
  - This bill allows certain Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grants allocated to states and local areas to be used to develop partnerships between educational institutions and employers to create or improve workforce development programs.
    - 06/05/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce



## **SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION**

SUPPORT the State of Florida becoming a member of the Southern Rail Commission and actively working to secure federal funding for the restoration of passenger rail throughout Florida.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was adopted at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- 2025-2026 NACo County Platform – Continuing Support
  - NACo believes there should be a coordinated federal-state-local effort to return rail service to its appropriate place in a balanced national transportation system. In this effort, NACo supports expanding and improving long-distance passenger service, and providing needed regulatory reform at the federal level.
- Bills 2025
  - [HB 833](#) by Hinson ([SB 966](#) by Davis) – Rapid Rail Transit – Died in Committee
    - The bill authorizes the Governor to enter into a Rapid Rail Transit Compact with Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.



## **PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER BENEFIT**

SUPPORT legislation expanding the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Public Safety Officers Benefits (PSOB) program to include coverage for public safety officers whose death or disability resulted from cancer diagnosed and sustained "in the line of duty," and to expand the death, disability, and educational benefits available to public safety officers and eligible survivors, as applicable.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: RETAIN**

#### **UPDATE:**

- This policy was adopted at the 2024 FAC Legislative Conference.
- [S. 237 \(H.R. 1269\)](#) Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act of 2025
  - To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide public safety officer benefits for exposure-related cancers, and for other purposes.



## **NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners Adopted at NACo Annual Conference July 2025**

### **Environment, Energy, and Land Use**

#### **Proposed Resolution Supporting the Expedited Release of Guidance and Funding for Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Projects**

**Issue:** Expedited the release of guidance and funding for flood control and coastal emergencies projects by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Coastal Storm Risk Management (CRSM) projects are crucial tools for mitigating and restoring damage from storm surge, projecting and supporting local economies and protecting habitats for endangered shorebirds and sea turtles.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Army Corps of Engineers to:

1. Immediately release implementation guidance for Section 1145 of WRDA 2024, allowing planning and construction to begin within the authorized two-year window.
2. Develop a workplan to deploy the \$745 million in Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies funding to protect impacted communities during the remainder of the 2025 and the full 2026 hurricane seasons.

**Background:** Congress appropriated \$745 million in the American Relief Act of 2025 (Public Law 118- 158, enacted December 21, 2024) for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to respond to natural disasters, including repairing authorized Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) projects at full federal expense. This funding responds to the extensive damage caused by Hurricanes Debbie, Helene and Milton, which left many Florida coastal communities unprotected ahead of the 2025 hurricane season, which began on June 1.

On January 4, 2025, Congress enacted the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024 (Public Law 118-272), authorizing a two-year window to repair eligible storm-damaged shore protection projects in a manner consistent with the previously completed initial construction and periodic nourishments. However, work cannot begin until the USACE issues implementation guidance for Section 1145 of the Act and a work plan is developed.

NACo supported shore protection provisions in WRDA 2024 prior to the severe storms of that year to ensure counties remained eligible for federal participation in Congressionally authorized CSRM projects.



## **NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners Adopted at NACo Annual Conference July 2025**

These projects are essential for protecting at-risk public and private infrastructure, minimizing economic disruption and preserving critical habitats for federally endangered species. NACo also aimed to prevent the loss of tens of millions in federal cost-share to local governments and maintain future eligibility for disaster-related assistance.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Ensures timely access to federal funds for shore protection, benefitting local economies, public safety, endangered species and recreational infrastructure.

**Sponsor(s):** Kathleen Peters, Commissioner, Pinellas County, Fla.

### **Proposed Resolution on Comprehensive Permitting Reform**

**Issue:** Due to the duplicative and burdensome federal permitting process, counties regularly encounter issues in securing permits for infrastructure and fuel management projects, resulting in delays and escalating costs. The current permitting process often excludes meaningful local engagement until late in the development phase, undermining the role of counties in shaping infrastructure and fuel management projects that meet community needs.

As Congress considers permitting reform in the 119th Congress, counties must be treated as active partners in the development and implementation of critical infrastructure and fuel management projects.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass comprehensive legislation to reform the federal permitting process that limits federal preemption of local authority and requires meaningful consultation and updates with local governments from the inception of critical infrastructure and fuel management projects—such as transportation, energy, broadband deployment, air quality, fuel breaks, forest thinning and use of prescribed fire—that require a federal permit. Reforms should also expand categorical exclusions for maintenance, safety improvements and projects within existing rights-of-way.

Counties call on Congress to eliminate duplicative reviews and develop efficient and consistent permitting processes across agencies and allow flexibility needed to respond to urgent infrastructure needs such as addressing natural disasters and post fire restoration projects. Permitting reform legislation should strongly consider the practical impacts of federal permitting processes on local governments and communities.



## **NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners Adopted at NACo Annual Conference July 2025**

**Background:** During the 118th Congress, energy permitting reform gained bipartisan traction, including the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee’s approval of the Energy Permitting Reform Act in July 2024. However, disagreements in Congress prevented inclusion of reform provisions in the final continuing resolution. Since taking office, President Trump has issued executive orders related to permitting reform, though further clarity is needed regarding how county governments will be engaged under any expedited permitting frameworks proposed by the Administration.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Streamlined permitting would reduce project delays, lower construction and fuel management project costs, and increase the capacity of counties—especially those in rural and resource-constrained areas—to deliver essential infrastructure and respond to public safety concerns.

**Sponsor(s):** Rosemarie Smallcombe, Supervisor, Mariposa County, Calif.; Shelley Brennan, Recorder, Duchesne County, Utah; Randall Ryti, Councilor, Los Alamos County, N.M.; Stuart Rimland, Legislative Council, Broward County, Fla.

### **HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION**

#### **Proposed Resolution on Expanding Title IV Eligibility to Short-Term Vocational Programs**

**Issue:** Support the expansion of Title IV federal student aid eligibility to include short-term vocational programs, in order to increase the supply of certified, skilled workers and address critical workforce shortages across multiple industries.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to expand eligibility for Title IV federal student aid to include high-quality, short-term vocational programs in high-demand occupational fields. This policy change would help increase the number of certified, job-ready workers and address pressing labor shortages in both urban and rural communities.

**Background:** Many in-demand, skills-based occupations—such as phlebotomy, certified nursing assistant (CNA), commercial driver’s license (CDL) training, and information technology certifications— are currently underserved due to a lack of certified, qualified workers. Expanding Title IV eligibility to short-term vocational training programs focused on these areas would enhance workforce readiness, meet employer



## **NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners Adopted at NACo Annual Conference July 2025**

needs, and expand economic opportunity.

Under current Title IV regulations, educational programs must meet minimum length requirements—typically 600 clock hours over at least 15 weeks for most programs, or 300 clock hours over 10 weeks for graduate or professional-level programs or those admitting students with an associate degree—to qualify for federal aid.

However, many effective short-term vocational programs fall just below these thresholds, despite yielding credentials that are directly tied to gainful employment. Including such programs in Title IV eligibility would have numerous benefits:

- **Economic Mobility:** Short-term training programs offer an affordable and expedited path to employment for individuals who may not have the financial means or flexibility to pursue traditional degree programs. This is particularly beneficial for low-income and underserved populations seeking upward economic mobility.
- **Workforce Alignment:** Many industries face acute shortages of skilled labor. Short-term programs can rapidly train students to meet specific industry needs, helping to close workforce gaps in healthcare, transportation, technology, and skilled trades.
- **Accessibility for Non-Traditional Students:** These programs are especially suited for working adults, parents, and part-time students who require more flexible educational options than those provided by traditional two- or four-year institutions.
- **Higher Completion Rates:** Due to their shorter duration and focused training, these programs often achieve higher completion rates than longer-term educational offerings.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Expanding Title IV eligibility to include short-term vocational programs would support workforce development in counties of all sizes. Rural and urban communities alike would benefit from increased access to targeted, job-relevant training programs. This expansion would help grow the pipeline of workers in high-demand fields, reduce unemployment, increase household incomes, and strengthen local economies.

**Sponsor(s):** Rick Minor, County Commissioner, Leon County, Fla.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Proposed Resolution in Support of Federal Action to Establish Responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guardrails that Protect Communities and Support U.S. Innovation**



## **NACo Resolutions Submitted by Florida Counties & Commissioners Adopted at NACo Annual Conference July 2025**

**Issue:** Counties are increasingly impacted by the deployment of artificial intelligence across government, healthcare, justice, transportation and the private sector. While AI offers transformative benefits, unregulated or poorly designed systems threaten civil liberties, public safety and trust in local government. Counties lack the resources and legal authority to manage these risks alone. At the same time, overly burdensome federal regulation could undermine American competitiveness and local economic growth.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) calls on Congress and relevant federal agencies to enact a national AI framework that:

- **Adopts a Risk-Based Regulatory Model:**
  - o Tailor federal guardrails based on the level of risk posed by AI applications—prioritizing oversight for high-risk domains (e.g., criminal justice, healthcare, social services) and streamlining low-risk uses (e.g., traffic management, code enforcement automation).
  
- **Safeguards Civil Rights and Local Accountability:**
  - o Require transparency, explainability and bias mitigation for AI systems used in public sector decisions. Support public engagement, grievance processes and local opt-out provisions for sensitive applications.
  
- **Funds Local Government AI Capacity:**
  - o Create a dedicated federal grant program for counties to pilot AI tools responsibly, build internal AI literacy and evaluate outcomes, with particular support for rural and underserved jurisdictions.
  
- **Promotes Innovation Through Smart Regulation:**
  - o Align U.S. AI policy with democratic allies to develop shared global standards. Simplify regulatory pathways for AI startups that demonstrate transparency, data accountability, and responsible model development, such as avoiding discriminatory outcomes or opaque decision-making, while preserving strong federal protections for privacy, civil rights, and fairness.
  
- **Mandates Transparency in Federal AI Tools Deployed Locally:**
  - o Require all federally funded or contracted AI tools used by local governments to disclose training data sources, known limitations and accuracy metrics, and to allow independent third-party auditing.
  
- **Invests in Workforce Transition and Education:**



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- o Support counties and regional workforce boards in preparing residents for AI-disrupted labor markets through upskilling, reskilling and partnerships with community colleges

- **Establishes Baseline National Data Privacy Standards:**

- o Develop federal data protection legislation that oversees the use of personal and sensitive data in AI systems, particularly those operating in local governance contexts.

**Background:** Counties are uniquely positioned at the intersection of public service delivery and emerging technologies, and are increasingly integrating artificial intelligence into functions like traffic management, emergency response, permitting, public health and justice administration. However, without clear, consistent federal guardrails, counties face significant legal, ethical and operational uncertainty. Local governments often lack the technical capacity to evaluate AI systems for bias, reliability or security—yet they are ultimately accountable to the public when these systems fail or cause harm.

Counties have a strong interest in ensuring that AI is deployed responsibly and equitably, without compromising civil liberties or public trust. At the same time, they rely on a healthy innovation ecosystem—including private-sector partners and technology vendors—to modernize services and control costs. NACo therefore supports federal policies that promote transparency, risk-based oversight and investment in local AI capacity, while avoiding overregulation that would limit innovation or disadvantage U.S.-based firms.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** This resolution calls for federal legislative and regulatory action to ensure AI systems benefit residents and communities equitably, while also providing local governments with the tools and funding to innovate responsibly.

**Sponsor(s):** Gregg Weiss, Commissioner, Palm Beach County, Fla.

### **Proposed Resolution Preserving County Authority: Opposition to Federal AI Moratorium 32 and BEAD Funding Condition**

**Issue:** Congressional proposals to impose a federally mandated AI moratorium and link BEAD funding to its adoption undermine counties' constitutional and practical authority to regulate emerging technologies locally.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) opposes any federal moratorium on state and local AI governance, including provisions tying BEAD



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broadband funds to moratorium compliance. NACo calls on Congress to preserve local regulatory flexibility and support a collaborative, multi-tiered AI governance framework.

**Background:** Counties have a direct and growing stake in how artificial intelligence is regulated, deployed, and funded locally. From smart infrastructure and traffic systems to permitting, elections, and public safety, counties are already integrating AI technologies into core public services. A federal moratorium that prohibits state and local governments from enacting AI-related laws for 10 years, especially with the threat of losing BEAD broadband funding, strips counties of essential tools to protect residents, ensure equity, and manage risk. Such preemption undermines local autonomy and endangers public trust in the technologies we are expected to adopt and oversee.

Counties are also stewards of significant infrastructure investments tied to broadband and digital equity. Conditioning BEAD access on AI regulatory inaction unfairly burdens communities that rely on these funds to bridge the digital divide. Local governments must retain the flexibility to adopt thoughtful, locally tailored AI policies that reflect their residents' values, economic priorities, and safety needs, without coercive federal mandates that compromise innovation and accountability.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Counties could face delayed adoption of necessary local AI safeguards concerning infrastructure, public safety, and digital equity. Moratorium compliance may incur administrative burdens without a corresponding benefit, and potential loss of BEAD broadband funding could impact rural and underserved areas.

**Sponsor(s):** Gregg Weiss, Commissioner, Palm Beach County, Fla.; Terry Burroughs, Commissioner, Okeechobee County, Fla.

### **Proposed Resolution Supporting the Reauthorization of the State and Local Cybersecurity 23 Grant Program**

**Issue:** Cybersecurity readiness is a national security issue, and counties play a key role in securing critical infrastructure, as well as key operations and services for residents. Counties must bear an increasing cost to remain cyber-secure, and the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program is expiring at the end of September.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to reauthorize the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program to preserve a grant-making program to support local governments' investment in cybersecurity readiness, infrastructure and initiatives. NACo further urges Congress to consider programmatic changes that improves direct pass-through of funding to county governments, as well as flexibility in the use of funds by individualized need. NACo urges Congress to appropriate funding for the SLCGP for Fiscal Year 2026, and to direct the Department of



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Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to undergo a stakeholder review of the SLCGP and submit recommended changes to Congress no later than one year from the date of re-authorization of the SLCGP. Ultimately, NACo urges Congress to support the SLCGP as a capacity-building program and not permanent support.

**Background:** Cybersecurity is a critical ingredient to ensuring the security of the nation from cyber espionage and sophisticated intrusions by bad actors – both domestic and foreign. As the nation has taken key steps across the last decade to mobilize the nation’s critical infrastructure sectors, much progress has

been made to build more resilient infrastructure and practices. However, county governments share an increasing burden in maintaining cybersecurity readiness and vigilance, as the cost of services and insurance continue to rise year over year.

The federal government assumes responsibilities for matters of national security. Just as the federal government would respond and provide support in the event of a land, sea or air-based invasion of the country, so too shall the federal government lead and protect the nation against cybersecurity intrusions by providing resources and support. Given the diffused nature of the nation’s system of federalism, the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program has emerged as a key policy innovation to begin providing much-needed direct support to state and local governments by employing a direct grant model.

To accomplish the mission of cyber-ready counties, and to ensure the program remains a capacity-building program and not permanent support, there are opportunities for continued refinement and improvement of the program. First, the program should provide direct funding to local government, regardless of size or population. Second, the program should improve flexibility in the use of funding. Finally, the program should incentivize public-private partnership and workforce development to address non-infrastructure needs in local cybersecurity readiness.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** The SLCGP would supplement existing efforts to shore up and improve cybersecurity at the local level.

**Sponsor(s):** Gregg Weiss, Commissioner, Palm Beach County Fla.; Jennifer Henderson, Treasurer, Schleicher County, Texas; Jennifer Clark, Board

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Proposed Resolution to Promote Safe and Consistent Federal Regulation of Autonomous Semi-Trucks on Intrastate Highways**



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**Issue:** Autonomous semi-trucks are rapidly advancing from testing phases to real-world deployments, with the potential to revolutionize freight transport by increasing efficiency, reducing driver shortages and improving safety. However, a patchwork of state-level laws and an absence of comprehensive federal regulations have created inconsistencies, regulatory uncertainty and safety concerns.

Counties—responsible for local road safety, economic development and emergency response—face growing challenges in addressing the deployment of these vehicles on intrastate highways that connect communities and logistics hubs.

Without a unified national approach, counties risk being exposed to legal ambiguity, insufficient oversight and potential public safety threats. Meanwhile, unclear standards hinder the growth of the autonomous trucking industry, which is crucial to maintaining U.S. competitiveness in global supply chains.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), to:

- 1. Establish a Comprehensive Federal Regulatory Framework for Autonomous Trucks:** Develop consistent, risk-based federal regulations for the testing, certification and commercial deployment of autonomous semi-trucks. Ensure uniform safety standards across states to streamline compliance for manufacturers and operators.
- 2. Protect Public Safety Through Core Operational Standards:** Require autonomous vehicles to meet robust minimum safety standards, including crash-avoidance capabilities, fail-safe mechanisms, cybersecurity protocols, and safe handover procedures. Mandate regular data reporting and incident disclosure to enhance transparency and accountability.
- 3. Support State and Local Coordination:** Facilitate collaboration with state and county governments to establish protocols for emergency response, law enforcement training, and road safety monitoring related to autonomous truck operations.
- 4. Prioritize Intrastate Highway Safety:** Ensure that autonomous trucks operating exclusively on intrastate highways are subject to the same stringent safety oversight as interstate operations. Provide guidance on how to classify and regulate intrastate operations to prevent regulatory loopholes.



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**5. Fund Local Infrastructure and Workforce Adaptation:** Establish federal grants to support counties in upgrading road infrastructure (e.g., signage, digital mapping, V2X communication systems) and retraining displaced workers in communities affected by driver automation.

**6. Encourage Innovation While Preserving Local Authority:** Promote innovation through clear federal rules that do not preempt counties' ability to implement complementary local safety measures or address region-specific concerns, particularly in high-traffic or rural areas.

**7. Create a National Data-Sharing Platform:** Mandate real-time and anonymized data sharing from autonomous truck fleets to a centralized federal database accessible to counties for traffic management, safety oversight, and infrastructure planning.

**Background:** Counties have a direct and vested interest in the safe and effective deployment of autonomous semi-trucks on intrastate highways, as these vehicles will operate within and across county jurisdictions, affecting local road safety, infrastructure, emergency services, and economic development.

Counties are responsible for maintaining portions of the transportation network, responding to roadway incidents, and safeguarding the wellbeing of residents. As such, counties require a clear federal regulatory framework that ensures autonomous trucks meet rigorous safety standards, while also preserving local input on enforcement, planning, and public engagement.

Furthermore, counties recognize the transformative potential of autonomous trucking to alleviate supply chain pressures and stimulate economic growth—particularly in rural areas that serve as freight corridors. To ensure this technology benefits communities equitably, counties seek federal investment in infrastructure modernization, workforce transition programs, and data-sharing mechanisms that enable informed local decision-making. A balanced, coordinated federal approach will allow counties to support innovation while upholding their responsibilities to protect public safety and foster resilient local economies.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** This resolution calls for targeted federal action to ensure counties are equipped to support and regulate autonomous truck deployment on intrastate highways. It emphasizes consistent national standards to avoid conflicting



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state regulations while prioritizing public safety, economic opportunity and local capacity-building.

**Sponsor(s):** Gregg Weiss, Commissioner, Palm Beach County, Fla.

### **Proposed Resolution Urging Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation to Reform Competitive Grant Programs**

**Issue:** Given local governments' lack of access to direct, federal formula funding, discretionary grants have often been the only way for counties to receive federal funding for transportation projects. However, there are several structural programs with many grant programs at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) that make applying for, receiving and utilizing grant funding difficult for all counties, but especially rural counties.

The majority of federal transportation grant programs require a non-federal match from applicants, no matter their sizes, and are funded on a reimbursable nature, thus requiring a county must make an upfront investment. This imposes a significant financial obstacle for many counties and makes federal transportation funding unworkable in many counties across the country.

Additionally, the structure of many grants from USDOT is too rigid and does not allow for necessary adjustments in grant agreements. This became especially evident amid high inflation for labor and material costs, which often took project costs beyond budgeted amounts.

This is exacerbated by the fact that USDOT often takes more than a year to sign and execute grant agreements, which allows for costs to grow before any progress can be made in a project.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to include additional options to waive or decrease local match requirements for USDOT competitive grant programs based on a population threshold, developed in coordination with local governments, within notices of funding opportunities (NOFOs) and to reduce and simplify reporting requirements to help rural counties with limited staff capacity.

Further, NACo urges USDOT to include language in NOFOs, modeled after the amended FY 2024 NOFO for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Resilience and Sustainability (RAISE) grant program, that allows USDOT to negotiate with counties for the advanced repayment of federally funded infrastructure projects.



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Third, NACo urges Congress to expand the practice of USDOT to account for labor and materials cost inflation in already signed grant agreements to other modal administrations, including the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Railroad Administration. Finally, NACo urges Congress and USDOT to identify ways to accelerate the finalization and signing of grant agreements in order to improve project timelines and save money for both the federal government and grant recipients.

**Background:** Counties own and maintain 44 percent of the nation's public road miles, which is more than any other level of government, and 38 percent of its bridges, yet receive no direct federal funding to support these vital infrastructure assets that serve not only county residents but the broader traveling public.

While the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL/P.L. 117-58) created dozens of new competitive grant programs through the USDOT where counties are directly eligible to apply, the historical structure of these programs has not changed, making these opportunities unworkable in many communities across the country.

This is especially true in the 70 percent of America's counties that are considered rural with populations below 50,000, resulting in serious human and financial constraints that often prevent access to USDOT competitive grant programs on the front end and significantly complicate administering an award on the back end. While population in these areas may be low, rural America is home to over two-thirds of the nation's road miles.

Small tax bases, lack of staff time and expertise and state limits on raising local revenue, combined with the structure of federal transportation programs, continues to plague rural communities across the country who could otherwise benefit from the historic transportation investments made by the BIL.

Another issue that makes grants difficult to access is that it often takes too long to execute grant agreements and begin construction, which creates cost overruns especially during periods of high inflation. Too often, USDOT cannot account for inflation-related cost overruns once grant agreements have been signed, which creates budget gaps that can jeopardize entire projects.

Congress recognized this issue in the recently passed Federal Aviation Administration Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-63), including a provision that allows for the FAA to increase the



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government's share in an already- signed Airport Improvement Program grant agreement to account for labor or material cost inflation.

Not only should Congress and USDOT work to speed up grant agreements, but this practice should be expanded to other modal administrations within USDOT.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Ensuring that infrastructure investments are accessible by counties of all sizes facilitates economic development and job creation and results in improved safety and an enhanced traveler experience.

**Sponsor(s):** Eileen Higgins, Commissioner, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

### **Proposed Resolution Urging Congress to Enact Legislation Creating a National Infrastructure Bank (NIB)**

**Issue:** According to the American Society of Civil Engineers 2025 Report Card, \$3.7 trillion is needed to bring our infrastructure to a state of good repair. Including other needed projects not considered by ASCE brings the total to over \$5 trillion to address current infrastructure shortfalls. A National Infrastructure Bank, which has been used historically to build our nation's infrastructure, could finance this entire amount utilizing requiring no new federal spending and no new federal taxes. The National Infrastructure Bank would provide new, low-cost, long-term financing, to allow counties to finance new and older projects. Economic experts say the NIB will increase GDP by at least 5% per annum.

**Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to enact legislation creating a \$5-trillion National Infrastructure Bank, to be capitalized by existing Treasury debt and requiring no new federal appropriations or no new federal taxes.

**Background:** Counties invest \$134 billion in building, maintaining and operating physical infrastructure and public works. Counties own and maintain 38 percent of the more than 600,000 bridges that comprise the national bridge inventory. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, 7.5 percent of the nation's bridges are considered structurally deficient, and 178 million trips are taken across these bridges every day. In 2020, more than 43,800 bridges were classified as structurally deficient and considered to be in poor condition, of which 53 percent are county owned. Off-system bridges comprise 46.3 percent (over 280,000 bridges) of the nation's bridges.

According to the 2025 ASCE Report Card, and infrastructure experts, the United States needs at least \$5 trillion in new money to bring our infrastructure to a state of good



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repair and build new projects. The federal budget is running an annual deficit of \$1-\$2 trillion per year. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will expire in 2026. There is little new money available to renew it. New financing is needed, and the “off-budget” NIB is a tried-and true additional tool for counties and other governmental bodies.

The NIB would be federally insured and would invest in states, cities, counties and public authorities. It would not privatize public infrastructure but would keep public infrastructure in public hands. Counties, would be primary beneficiaries, as they own much of the nation’s infrastructure. Loans would be long-term, very low-interest, flexible repayment and for infrastructure projects. The NIB has a Trust Fund to give grants to poor communities. There would enough money to invest in every county in the nation, rural and urban.

The NIB would be run by a Board of Directors appointed by Congress, and composed of builders, engineers, state, local and county officials. The Bank would report regularly to Congress. The NIB would create over 20 million new high-wage jobs, increase the tax revenue base and increase productivity.

The 2020 NACo Legislative Conference passed a similar resolution, number 159. “Interim Resolution Urging Congress to Enact Legislation Creating a National Infrastructure Bank to Finance Urgently Needed Infrastructure Projects”.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** The National Infrastructure Bank would provide new, low-cost, long-term financing, to allow counties to finance new and older projects. Economic experts say the NIB will increase GDP by at least 5% per annum. The historical record confirms this. It will increase job creation, rapid expansion of small and medium-size business, and increase tax revenues available to all counties. It will benefit counties financially. Many cities, counties and states have recognized the benefits of establishing an NIB and have passed resolutions of support.

Endorsements include: Delaware County Council, Pa; Allegheny County Council, Pa.; Northampton County Council, Pa; Philadelphia City Council; Mercer County, NJ Board of Chosen Freeholders; Rio Arriba County Commission, NM; Dodge County Board of Supervisors, WI; Lucas County Ohio Board of Commissioners; Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments; Westchester County Board of County Legislators, NY; Ulster County Legislature, NY; Albany County Legislature, NY; New York State Association of Counties; Dodge County, WI; San Francisco Board of Supervisors; Fresno CA Council of Governments; Florida Association of Counties; St Louis County Council, MO.; Essex County Board of Supervisors, VA; and my own county, Alachua County Board of County Commissioners, FL.

**Sponsor(s):** Mary Alford, Commissioner, Alachua County, Fla.



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