



Federal and State Legislative Lightning Round

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Naco.org

Overview



Recent Achievements and Ongoing Activities

Election Update

Policy Outlook and Hot Topics



ROLE OF NACo AND AMERICA'S COUNTIES IN OUR INTERGOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM



Under America's form of federalism, the intergovernmental system is about the balance, division, and sharing of power and responsibilities among levels of government



Telling the County Story in Washington



Franklin Co. (Ohio) Commissioner Kevin Boyce testifying before U.S. Senate Budget Committee on **NACo's Housing Affordability Task Force**



Audrain County (MO) Presiding Commissioner testifying before U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on the **challenges in securing federal transportation grants**



Fremont Co. (Colo.) Commissioner Dwayne McFall testifying on behalf of NACo before U.S. House Committee on **Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands**



Key Achievements for Counties in Federal Policy

- **U.S. Treasury:** Secured new county flexibilities for remaining Recovery Funds
- **FCC:** New rules to address geo-routing of 988 National Suicide Lifeline Calls
- **HHS:** mental health parity, suspension vs termination, juvenile release, etc
- **FEMA Dashboard:** Continuing work on increased transparency
- **FAA:** Increased funding for county airports
- **Farm Bill Drafts:** Key County Priorities Included

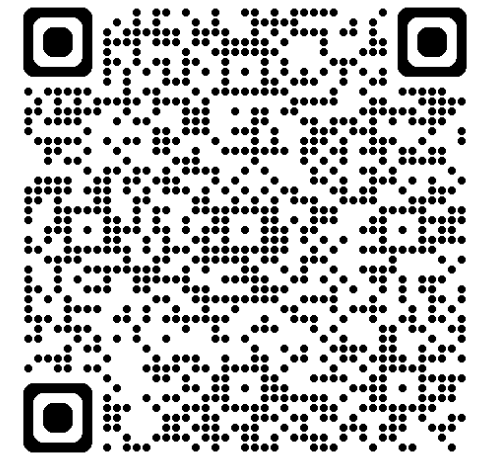
U.S. Treasury Revised Guidance for Obligation IFR

- **U.S. Treasury Department's ARPA Update**

- ✓ Released New FAQs For SLFRF Obligation IFR
- ✓ Incorporated NACo's Recommendations
- ✓ Granted Additional Flexibilities for County Investments

- **NACo's Advocacy**

- ✓ Enhance use of dollars for county personnel thru Dec. 2026
- ✓ Allow repurposing of dollars after Dec. 2024 thru Dec. 2026 for other eligible uses
- ✓ Clarify requirements for sub recipients of county aid



Mental Health and Wellbeing

- **Insurance Parity for Mental Health**

- ✓ Contributed to the President's Executive Order ensuring parity in mental health insurance

- **Medicaid and CHIP Coverage Expansion**

- ✓ Short-term coverage for individuals in county jails and juvenile facilities

- **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline**

- ✓ Implemented geo-routing for efficient crisis response



Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act

- **Increased Funding For Airports**
 - ✓ Boost in Airport Improvement Program Budget
- **Streamlined Airport Project Permits**
- **Aviation Workforce Development**
 - ✓ New Programs for Workforce Growth
 - ✓ South Carolina has 58 publicly owned, public-use airports





NACo PRIMER FOR COUNTIES:

2024 FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION



COUNTY PRIORITIES FOR THE 2023 FARM BILL

The National Association of Counties (NACo), which represents all of America's 3,069 county governments, seeks to work with our federal partners to develop a substantive farm bill to strengthen federal resources that allow counties to make critical investments in our nation's most underserved populations. As a key intergovernmental partner, counties welcome the opportunity to work with our federal partners toward the passage of a bipartisan, comprehensive and long-term Farm Bill that achieves our shared priorities of invigorating rural communities, providing access to affordable and healthy foods and supporting farmers and ranchers that stimulate our economy and feed our nation.

Therefore, counties support the following priorities for the 2024 Farm Bill:

- **Improve ease of access and flexibility of Farm Bill programs:** Cumbersome regulations and statutory requirements restrict rural communities from accessing the resources they desperately need to thrive. Counties support legislative action to streamline application processes and reporting requirements for Farm Bill programs. Counties also support efforts to add additional flexibility for federal

match requirements that force rural communities to secure additional funding before unlocking much-needed resources.

- **Provide stronger support for small and mid-size producers:** According to the USDA, small farm operations make up almost 90 percent of the nation's farms. Despite the vital role these producers play in their communities and local, state, and national economies, small farmers often struggle to access affordable sources of financing they need. An increasing number of these operations rely on off-farm sources of income to make ends meet. This trend has corresponded with a troubling decline in family farms. Counties support enhancements to resources, such as the Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (FOTO) program, that support beginning, small, and mid-size producers.



ACTION ITEMS: Urge your Members of Congress to fully fund the Farm Bill by passing a five-year reauthorization that addresses county priorities. Programs throughout the legislation help counties and our residents make critical investments in infrastructure, workforce and economic development, nutrition and conservation for some of our nation's most underserved communities.

TITLE VI: RURAL DEVELOPMENT

FIVE-YEAR FUNDING LEVEL: \$432 BILLION

"Negative funding level is the result of a change to the 'cushion of credit' provision for rural electric utilities. The Rural Development title supports rural business and community development and addresses a wide range of policy issues concerning rural America, including equity capital development in rural areas, regional economic planning and development, essential community facilities, water and wastewater infrastructure needs, and broadband deployment."

Rural Broadband

The USDA-Rural Utilities Service (RUS) houses several broadband assistance programs to fund and finance broadband deployment authorized by the Farm Bill.

Rural Broadband Loans, Loan/Grant Combinations, and Loan Guarantees: Provides loans and loan guarantees to fund costs of construction, improvement or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide service at the broadband lending speed in eligible rural areas.

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program: Provides grants and loans for the construction, improvement or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service in eligible rural areas.

Community Connect Grant Program: Provides funding for broadband service on a "community-oriented connectivity" basis to foster economic growth and deliver enhanced educational, health care, and public safety benefits.

Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee Program: Funds the deployment, expansion, and improvements of both broadband and telephone infrastructure networks in rural areas.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program: Helps rural communities use the unique capabilities of telecommunications to connect to each other and to the world, overcoming the effects of remoteness and low population density.

Middle Mile Infrastructure Program: Provides grants to assist eligible entities establish the "middle mile," the physical infrastructure which interconnects communities. This program did not receive appropriations over the five years of the 2018 Farm Bill. A similar program, Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure Grants, was created in the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, though the demand for the program exceeded available funding by roughly five times. Additionally, it was only funded in FY 2022.

HOW TO ACCESS:

Counties are eligible to apply directly through USDA-RUS for these funding and financing opportunities during open application periods, with the exception of Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans, which accept applications year-round (find your General Field Representative to get started).

NACo Policy: Counties support USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the valuable technical assistance their field offices provide. Additionally, county officials are concerned about the loss of productive farmland to nonagricultural uses because of increasing development and urge Congress and the USDA to support measures to retain, protect and improve agricultural land and conserve topsoil, consistent with local land use policies and controls.

The background of the image is a solid black field. Overlaid on this field are thousands of thin, vertical lines of varying heights and colors. The colors are primarily green, red, and yellow, with some lines appearing as a mix of these colors. The lines are distributed across the entire width of the image, creating a dense, textured effect that resembles a digital or data-driven background.

2024 Federal Election Update

2024 Election Update

- **U.S. Senate:**

- **34 seats up** for election (23 D, 11 R)
- **Toss-up rated** races: Mont., Nev. & Ohio
- **Closely watched:** Ariz., Fla., Mich., Pa., Tx. & Wisc.

- **U.S. House:**

- All 435 seats up
- Current 218-213 Republican majority
- 50 open seats due to retirements/other races
- Redistricting in some states may impact outcomes



2024 Election Update

- **Presidential Race in Flux: Trump vs Harris**
 - Tight race with key swing states (AZ, GA, MI, NV, NC, PA, WI)
- **Down Ballot Impact on Congress, States & Locals**
 - Control for U.S. Senate and House
 - 11 Gubernatorial races (8 R & 3 D incumbents)
 - Super majorities and governing control of state legislatures
 - 126 statewide ballot measures across 36 states, including high-profile issues like abortion, cannabis, immigration, and taxes





Federal Policy Outlook: On the Horizon for 2025



Outlook for Fall 2024

- **FY2025 Appropriations**
 - Direct Federal Investment in Counties
- **Farm Bill Reauthorization**
 - Continued Focus on County Farm Bill Priorities
- **Affordable Housing and Homelessness**
 - Initiatives to Address Housing Affordability and Homelessness Issues
- **Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Reforms**
 - Reforms Aimed at Improving Mental Health & Justice Practices, through The SUPPORT Act



NACo FY2025 Appropriation Priorities

Community Support and Development

- Rural communities and vulnerable populations
- Economic growth with housing, nutrition, and facilities

Public Safety and Emergency Management

- Disaster relief, firefighting and emergency preparedness
- Public safety with law enforcement grants

Infrastructure and Environment

- Transportation, water and broadband
- Energy, natural resources and wildfire prevention

Health and Human Services

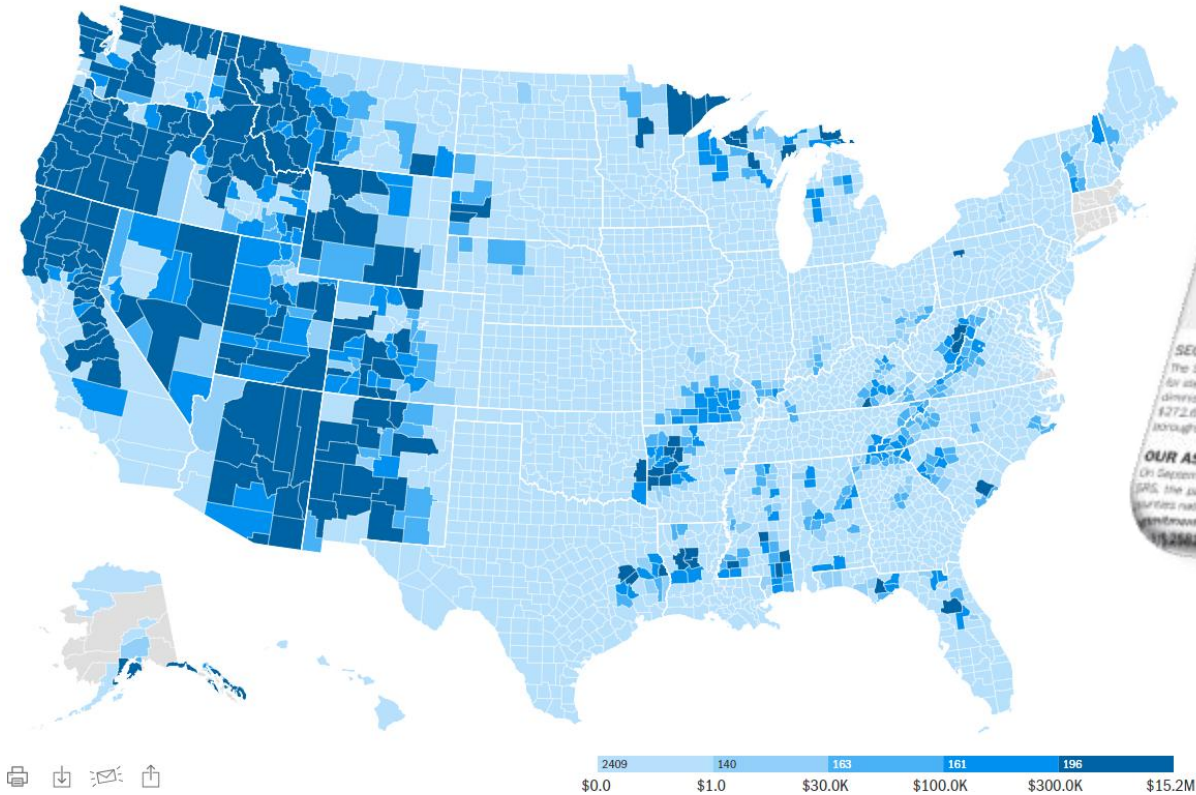
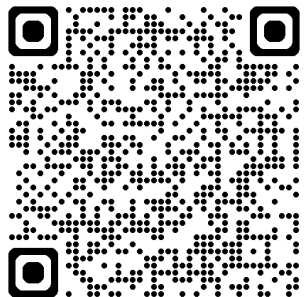
- Behavioral health and human services
- Child welfare and healthcare workforce development



Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Reauthorization

- Program at high risk for lapse of reauthorization and future years of funding
- Urgent congressional action is needed before FY2025 payment cycle
- **742 eligible counties**, focused on counties formerly dependent on federal timber sales
- Also need real commitment from federal partners re: **active forest management & Old Growth Amendment reforms**

HOW MUCH SRS MONEY DOES YOUR COUNTY RECEIVE?





SOUTH CAROLINA

2023 SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS (SRS)

SRS PAYMENTS FY 2023 RECEIPTS YEAR:	PROJECTED 25% PAYMENT INFLATION ADJUSTED FY 2017 NUMBERS *:	PROJECTED 25% PAYMENT VS. SRS PAYMENT:	PERCENT OF COUNTIES WITH U.S. FOREST SERVICE LAND:
\$1.6 M	\$1.5 M	-7.6%	30.4%

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination (SRS) Act was enacted in 2000 to compensate for steep reductions in revenues from timber harvests, which resulted from national policies that substantially diminished revenue-generating activities within federal forests. For FY 2023, the SRS program provided \$272.6 million for roads and schools and other critical services in over 700 mostly rural counties, parishes and boroughs across the United States. Congress reauthorized SRS payments for FY 2021-2023.

OUR ASK

On September 30, 2023, authorization for the SRS program lapsed. Absent congressional action to reauthorize SRS, the payments released in April 2024 will be the final payments counties receive. Without SRS, forest counties nationwide will face dramatic budgetary shortfalls. **Counties urge Congress to renew its long-standing commitment to forest counties by passing the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2023 (H.R. 5030/S.2581).**

Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Reauthorization

- South Carolina received \$1.6 million in SRS payments for FY 2023
- 30.4% of South Carolina counties have U.S. Forest Service land
- Without SRS reauthorization, South Carolina counties could face a 7.6% reduction in payments

Mariposa County, Calif.

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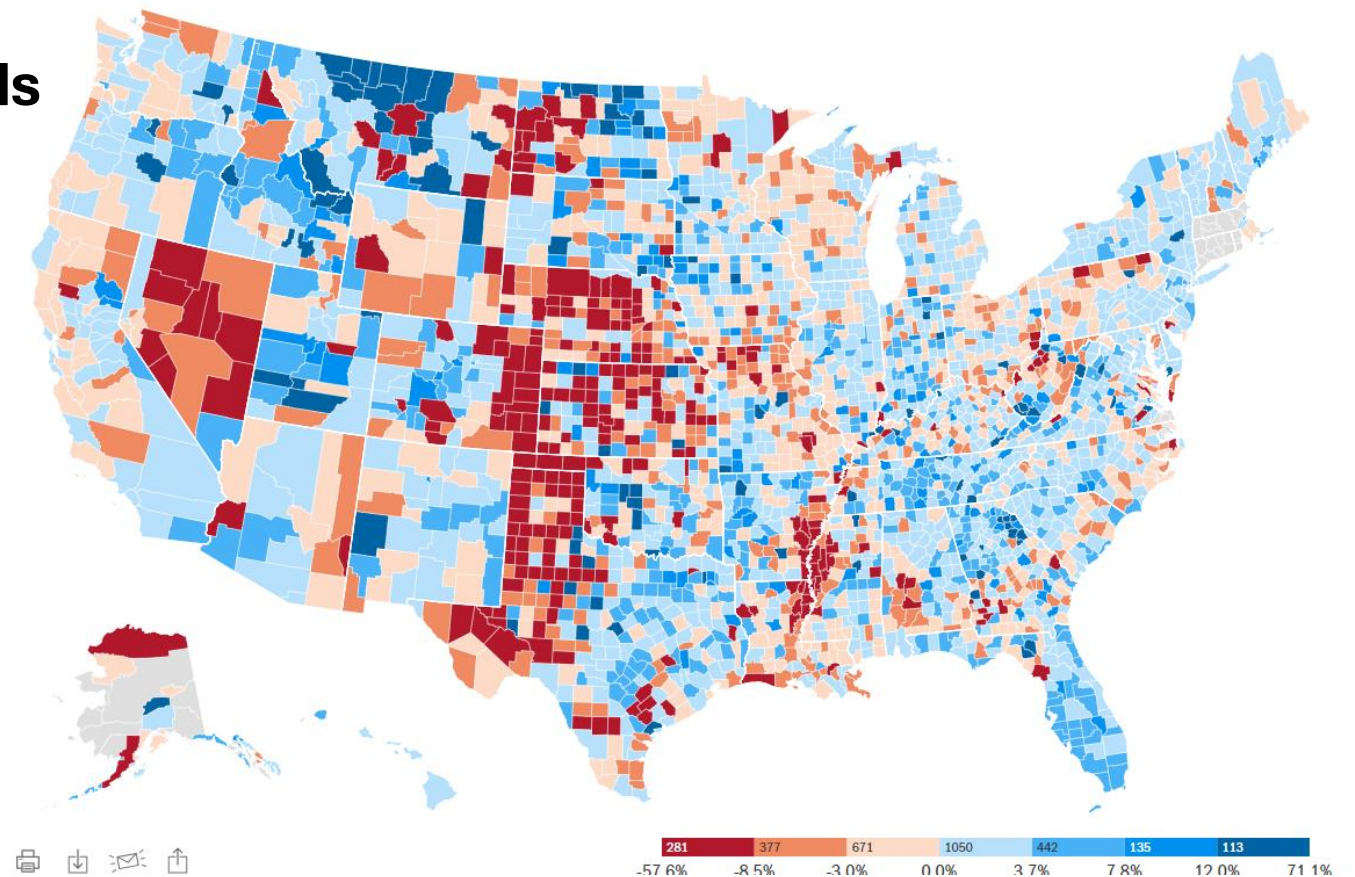
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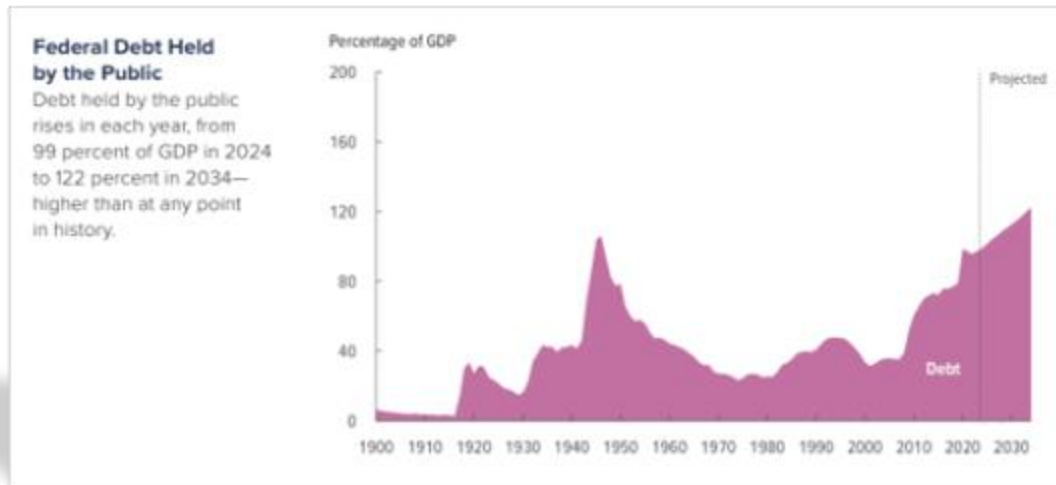
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Outlook 2025: Local, State and Federal Budget Trends

- Revenue Decline in Several States Post-Growth Period
- Uncertainty About Non-Defense Discretionary Federal Funding
- Unequal Growth in America's Counties



2025 Policy Outlook: Debate over Expiration, Extension & Reforms of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act



- Expiration of TCJA Provisions
- Changes to Tax Rates
- SALT Deduction Cap
- Impact on County Finances & Bonds

**Policy Outlook:
Other Tax
Considerations
for 2024 & 2025**

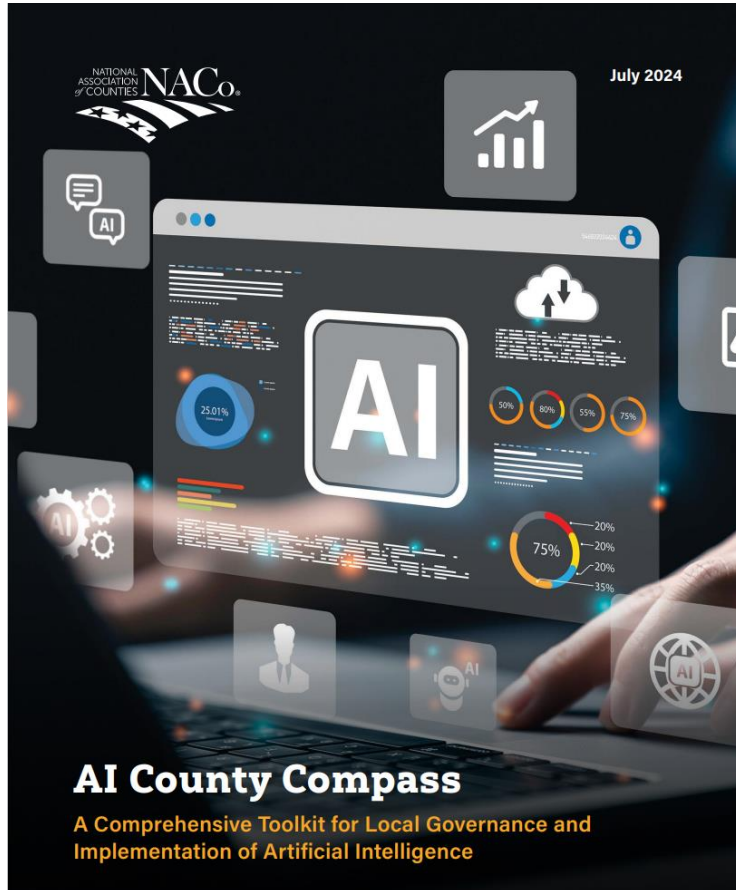
Child Tax Credit

Standard Deduction Changes

Potential Impact on County Revenues



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE



A Path Forward

Roadmap to Implementing GenAI Solutions

In counties, GenAI is already making its mark in various ways. You might notice it in services you already use, test programs, projects developed within organizations, collaborations between public and private sectors and academic research. But as GenAI expands, it brings up important questions about how it is managed, funded, secured and adopted.

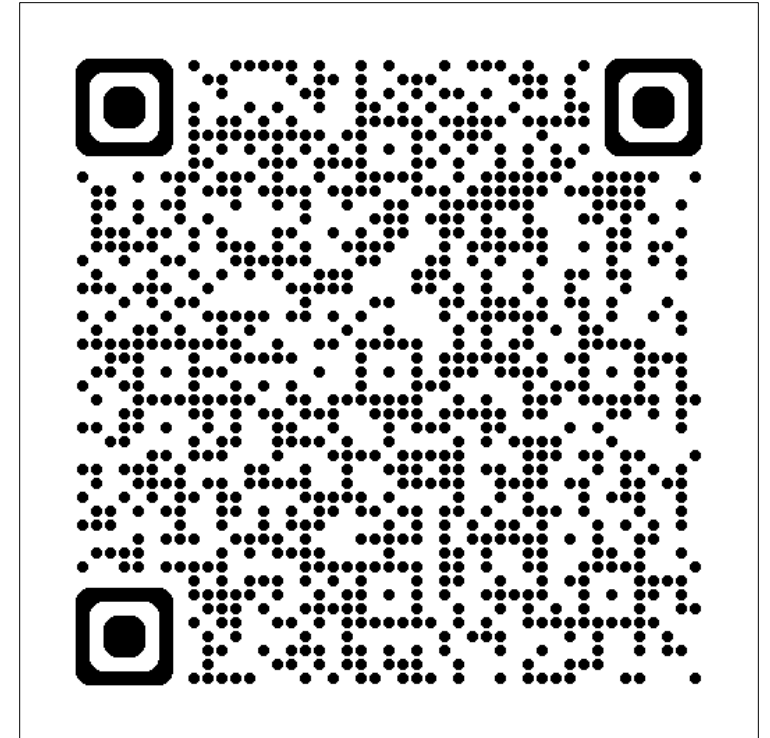
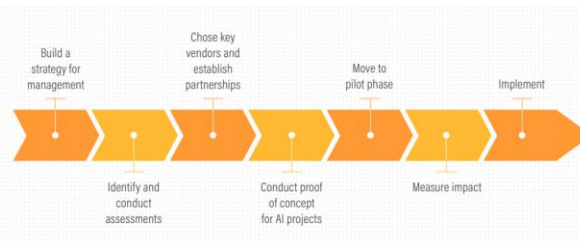
Next Steps

As you embark on your AI Journey, here is a proposed list of next steps:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Step 1 Review this publication in its entirety and share with your county team on AI use, implementation and policy. | Step 5 Develop your GenAI policy, guidelines and standards. Sample policies, guidelines and standards may be found by joining the NACo Tech Xchange Unlimited Program. |
| Step 2 Familiarize yourself with the NACo AI Membership Survey publication located on the NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub. | Step 6 Make available to your workforce online educational resources such as the no-cost LinkedIn AI Series. |
| Step 3 Survey your county departments to assess current utilization of AI and GenAI tools. A sample of questions to include in your survey is located in the NACo AI Primer. | Step 7 Assess projects and requests for proposals that may have an AI component by scheduling an AI Idea Hackathon and utilizing available tools such as Microsoft's assessment tool. |
| Step 4 Sign up for NACo's on-going AI webinar series. Register interest by completing the online form available through the NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub. | |

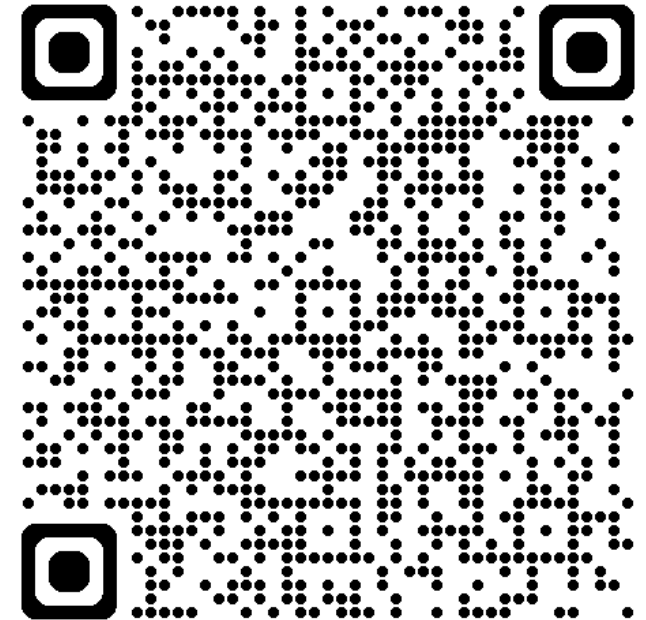


NACo AI Compass and Resource Hub



Outlook 2025: GenAI Policy

- **Impact on Local Government Operations**
 - Best Practices for AI Adoption
- **State-level AI Policy**
 - Emergence of AI-specific regulations at the state level
- **Washington DC is Active**
 - Hearings, Task Forces, Legislation, Summits
- **County Participation in State Commissions**
 - Need for county representatives in state AI commissions





Election Integrity and Worker Safety

- **Achieved: Enhancing HAVA Grant Funding**
 - ✓ Secured funding & tracking direct sub-allocation
- **Ongoing: Pushing for Increased Funding and Flexibility**
 - Providing new tools, funding and support for county and local election officials
 - Advocating for passage of the *Election Worker Protection Act* in the U.S. Senate

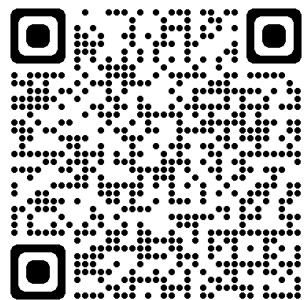


Outlook 2025: Energy, Environment and Land Use

- Preparing for increased power demand from AI computing and EVs
- Renewable energy and land use debates
- Legal challenges to EPA regulations on PFAS standards

Supreme Court Advocacy Hub

Sharing the county perspective on key Supreme Court cases

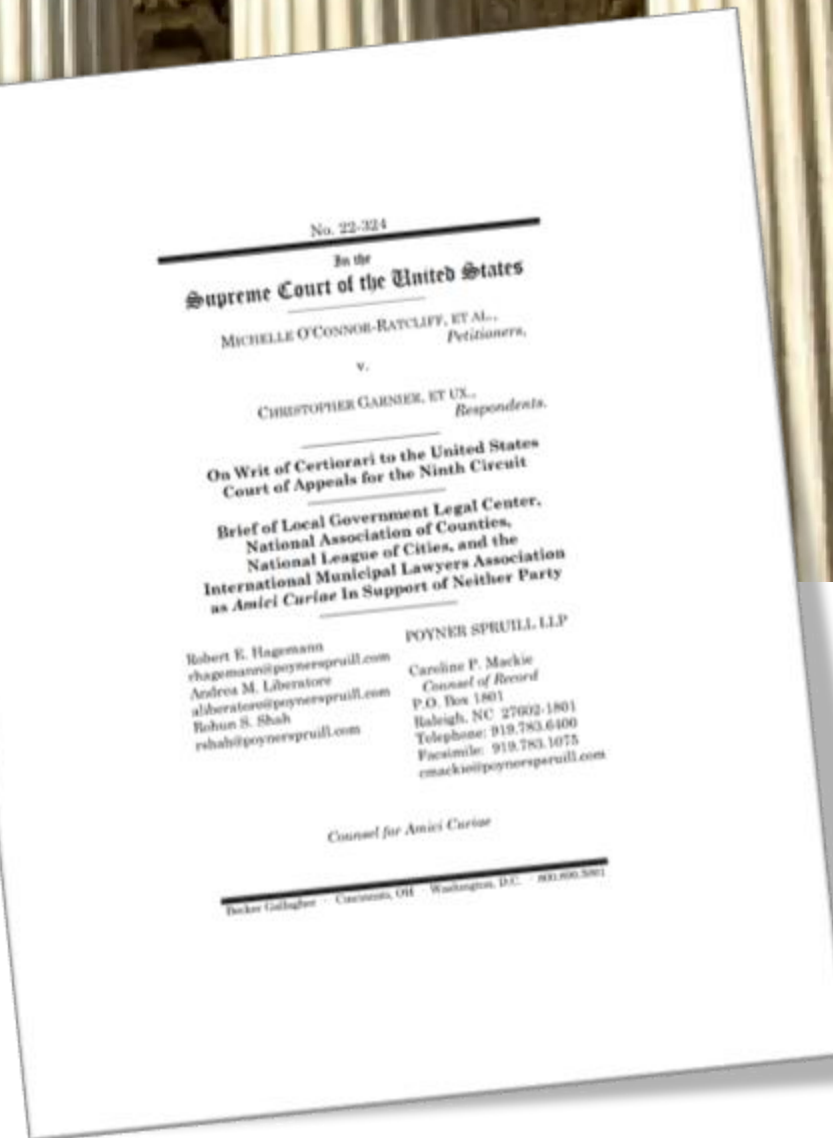


POLICY PRIORITY

Supreme Court Advocacy

As the U.S. Supreme Court addresses some of the most complex public policy issues of the day, it is essential that county officials are aware of the Supreme Court's docket and offer our perspectives on the practical, frontline realities on county-related legal issues.

[Learn More](#)



Outlook 2025: SCOTUS

2023-2024 Supreme Court Term



ADVOCACY

Supreme Court Update: *Chiaverini vs. City of Napoleon*

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

The county perspective on a case involving malicious prosecution



ADVOCACY

Supreme Court Update: *City of Grants Pass v. Gloria Johnson*

JANUARY 12, 2024

The county perspective on a case related to the constitutionality of certain local anti-encampment ordinances



ADVOCACY

Supreme Court Update: *Gonzalez v. Trevino*

OCTOBER 10, 2023

The county perspective on a case involving retaliatory arrests



ADVOCACY

Supreme Court Update: *Lindke v. Freed/O'Connor Ratcliff v. Garnier*

OCTOBER 31, 2023

The county perspective on a case related to public officials' use of personal social media accounts



ADVOCACY

Supreme Court Update: *Muldrow v. St. Louis*

DECEMBER 6, 2023

The county perspective in a case concerning discrimination claims in lateral employment transfers

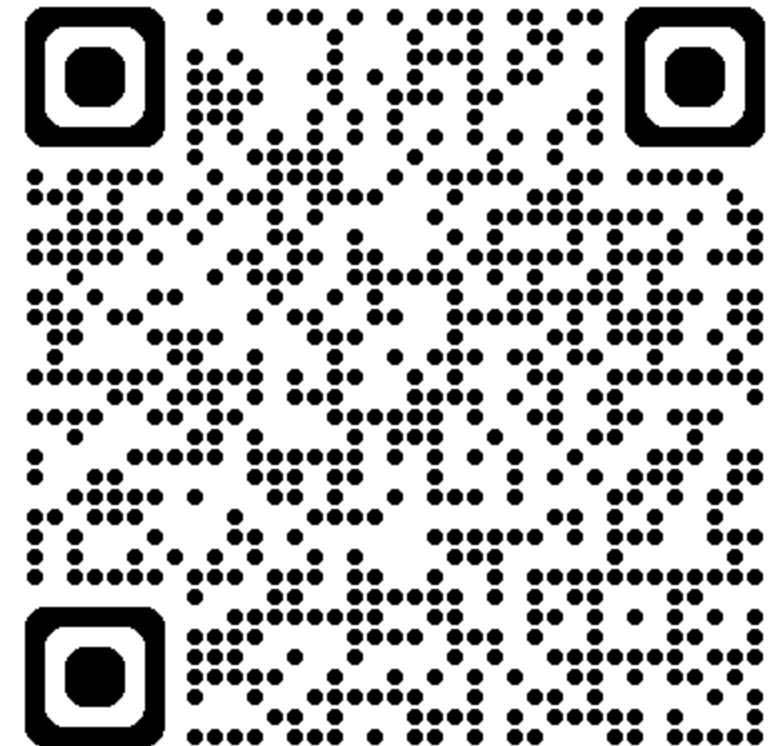


ADVOCACY

Supreme Court Update: *Sheetz v. El Dorado County*

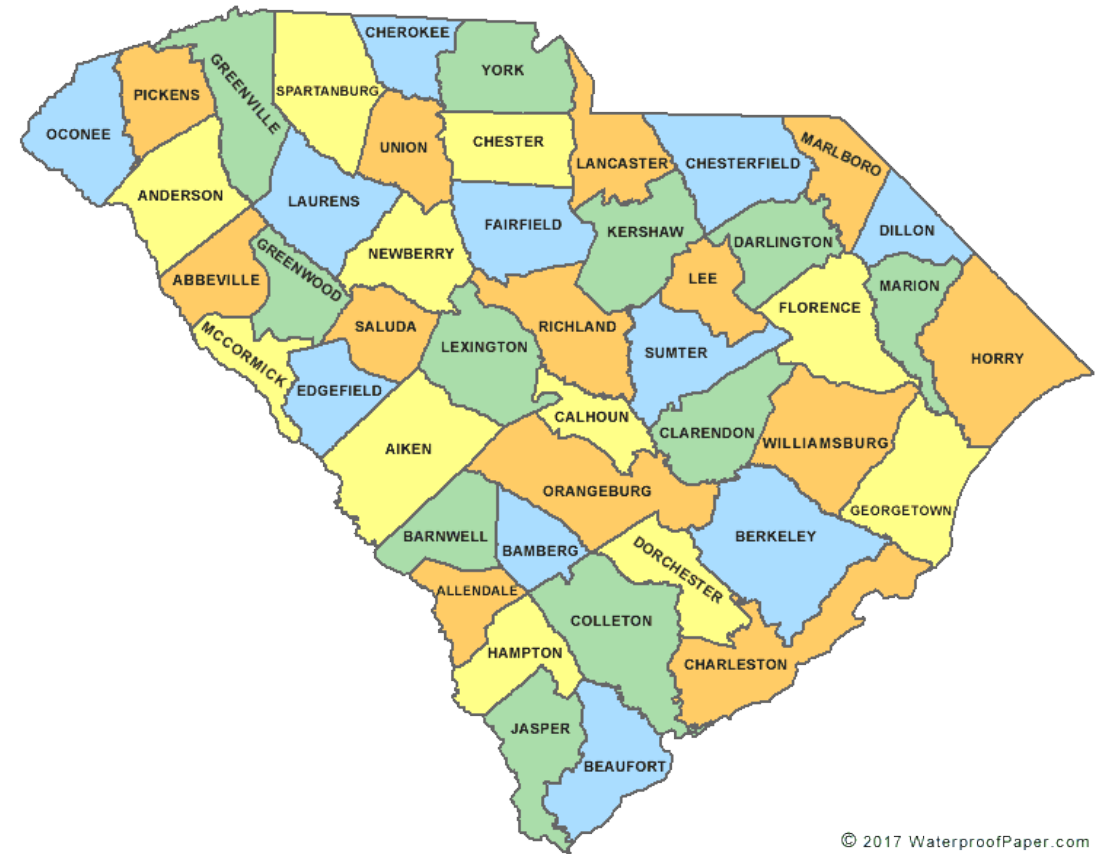
JANUARY 9, 2024

The county perspective on a case involving the constitutionality of legislative enacted, generally applicable impact fees for new development



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
of COUNTIES **NACo** **COUNTY EXPLORER**

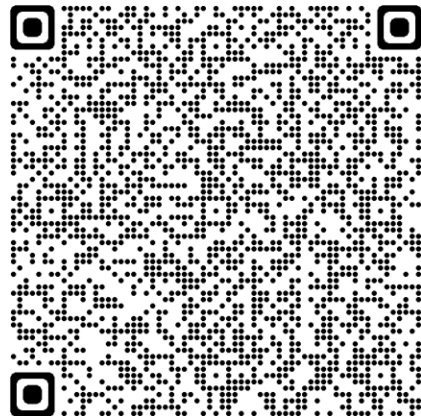
- South Carolina counties have constitutional home rule
- Key services counties must provide (e.g., roads, bridges, child welfare) and can provide (e.g., zoning, public safety)



Light it green to welcome America's veterans home



#OperationG



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OPERATION GREEN LIGHT FOR VETERANS: COUNTY TOOLKIT

[Advocacy](#) [Legislative Presentations, Reports & Toolkits](#) [Veterans Affairs](#)



America's counties have a long and proud history of serving our nation's veterans, a legacy that continues to this day as we work with our federal, state and local partners to ensure that the former service members in our communities have access to the resources they need to thrive.

COUNTIES MATTER FOR VETERANS

America's counties are home to 17.5 million veterans, and we are deeply invested in veterans' health and well-being, often serving as a veteran's first point of contact in the community for accessing services. Counties support



South Carolina



BAMBERG COUNTY, S.C.



CALHOUN COUNTY, S.C.



DORCHESTER COUNTY, S.C.



MARLBORO COUNTY, S.C.



NEWBERRY COUNTY, S.C.



RICHLAND COUNTY, S.C.



Wrap-up: Key Policy Initiatives

- **Farm Bill Reauthorization**
 - Opportunity to pass key ag, conservation, forest health, nutrition and rural development priorities
- **Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Reauthorization**
 - Urgent action is needed to reauthorize and secure future funding for more than 700 eligible counties
- **Affordable Connectivity Program**
 - Without the continuation of ACP our residents won't be able to benefit from leaps forward in technology
- **Mental Health**
 - Continued focus on community wellness
- **Election Funding and Flexibility**
 - Need for election funding and flexibility in administration



THE COUNTY●○● COUNTDOWN

NACo's
Intergovernmental
Policy Bulletin

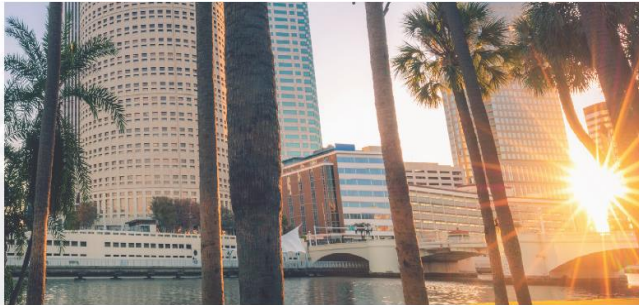
Delivering the Latest Federal Policy News and Resources

SAVE THE DATES

Upcoming NACo Conferences

2024 NACo Annual Conference & Exposition

July 12-15
Hillsborough County (Tampa), Fla.



2025 NACo Legislative Conference

March 1-4
Washington, D.C.



2024 Joint Board of Directors, Large Urban County Caucus and Rural Action Caucus Symposium

December 4-7
Sonoma County, Calif.



2025 Western Interstate Region Conference

May 20-23
Pennington County, S.D.

