



Pikes Peak Area
Council of Governments
Communities Working Together

MEETING AGENDA
PPACG LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
March 13, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

PPACG Upper Conference Room – 15 S. 7th St., Colorado Springs, CO 80905

<http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting>

Meeting ID: 221 692 137 560

Passcode: UCG9YV

Meeting will be held in a hybrid format to allow in-person attendance as well as a remote option.

1. Call to Order – Commissioner Stone and/or Mayor Dixon
2. Updates from Federal Partners
 - A. Update on Colorado River – Antonio Huerta
 - B. Updates from National Association of Regional Councils and USAging ☒
3. Colorado Legislative Update – Dan Jablan
 - A. Review of recently introduced bills
 - B. Review of emphasis bills ☒
 - C. Review of the remaining bill tracking list (time permitting):
<https://www.coloradocapitolwatch.com/bill-tracker-votes/0/6512/2023/0/>
 - D. Questions
4. Member open discussion

The purpose of the Legislative Committee is to draft the annual Policy Statement on Legislative Issues for Board of Directors approval, help develop legislative bills, develop position statements on proposed bills, laws, regulatory actions and other initiatives, meet with elected representatives and lobbyists in order to communicate PPACG's position, to testify before legislative bodies, boards and commissions, and work with other similar agencies and groups in formulating legislative positions.

A quorum of Board members may be present at this meeting.

Federal update provided by the National Association of Regional Councils

The Senate and House are both in session.

The President's Budget

President Biden's fiscal year 2024 budget, which was supposed to be sent to Congress on the first Monday of February (February 6 this year), will now be delivered in two parts. The main summary volume will be sent to Congress on Thursday, March 9, while the remaining explanatory documents will be submitted on Monday, March 13. The annual summary volume will lay out the president's main budget message, top priorities, some brief details on each agency's request and summary tables. In addition, the March 13 release will include an appendix with detailed appropriations language, and "analytical perspectives" with further explanatory material and more. While the president's budget is often considered "dead on arrival," especially by the opposition party, it provides lawmakers with important information about the president's plans for the coming year, including programs, grants, and oversight. In the coming weeks we can expect cabinet members to testify before the Senate and House Appropriations Committees on the budget. In addition, agencies will be holding briefings for stakeholders on the budget and the department's goals and objectives for the coming fiscal year. NARC will continue to monitor the president's budget and will report on it in eRegions and Transportation Thursdays.

House Majority Poised to Introduce Massive Energy Bill

The House majority is finalizing a massive energy bill that consolidates 20 bills, according to [Politico](#) (pay wall), and includes ideas that Republicans have sought to put into law over the past decade. These include boosting fossil-fuel production on federal lands, undoing the president's block of development of the Keystone XL pipeline, and easing environmental reviews of energy and mining projects. House majority leadership hopes to bring the bill, which has been in development since Republicans took control of the House, to the floor the last week of March.

House Majority Eliminates Labor-Labor-HHS-Education Spending Bill Earmarks

House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Kay Granger, R-Texas, released guidance Tuesday, February 28 banning "community project funding" or earmarks from the Labor-HHS-Education funding bill. The Labor-HHS-Education bill is the largest nondefense spending bill. Fiscal year funding for the Labor-HHS-Education bill was roughly \$227 billion. The House majority put this rule into effect because the bill included \$2.7 billion in earmarks, and "covered controversial areas with divergent policy priorities for the two parties," according to Roll Call. There is concern from both sides of the aisle that this restriction will make passage of the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education funding bill much more difficult. Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark., a senior appropriator who leads the Financial Services panel, said he believes the earmark ban will make the Labor-HHS-Education bill harder to pass. According to Roll Call, Rep. Womack said, "Labor-HHS is always hard to pass, it doesn't need any help being harder to pass. In any bill, you want to create a circumstance where people want to vote for it."

Special Funding Requests by Members of Congress Begin Friday, March 10

Regions working with their representatives or senators on funding issues may wish to review [this document](#) that outlines member procedures for submitting funding requests to various committees. Representatives will have the opportunity to make funding recommendations, requests for bill or report language that guides the actions of federal agency activities, and funding for specific projects in their communities. Leadership has provided specific guidance for [community project funding](#) (earmarks). As a reminder, no community project funding will be part of the Labor-HHS-Education bill.

House Votes to Overturn Biden WOTUS Rule

Thursday, H.J. Res. 27, a resolution to overturn the Biden Administration's flawed, burdensome "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) rule, was approved by the House of Representatives by a vote of 227 to 198. The Biden rule would lead to sweeping changes to the federal government's authority to regulate what is considered a navigable water, with impacts on small businesses, manufacturers, farmers, home and infrastructure builders, local communities, water districts, and private property owners. The resolution was introduced on February 2nd by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves and Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Chairman David Rouzer (R-NC), and was cosponsored by 170 Members of Congress. An identical resolution was introduced in the Senate by Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and was cosponsored by all 49 Senate Republicans. The resolution was approved by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on February 28th. "American families, farmers, small businesses, and entire communities are suffering under the economic crises caused by the disastrous Biden policies of the last two years. The last thing they need is this Administration's inexplicable decision to move the country back toward the overreaching, costly, and burdensome regulations of the past, which is exactly what this WOTUS rule does," said Graves. "I now look forward to continuing to work with our leadership, our committee colleagues, Senator Capito, and all opponents of this unnecessary rule to ensure our legislation is sent to the President's desk."

To learn more, [go here](#).

White House's Environmental Justice Tool Still Comes Up Short, Advocates Say

Environmental justice groups say a [White House screening](#) tool to help direct federal grant money to historically disadvantaged areas still misses the mark because it doesn't identify the places where residents have been hardest hit by pollution and other environmental harms.

"There is a real concern within environmental justice communities that, in the absence of really specific guidance that target communities, this will be another once-in-a-lifetime opportunity where money just bypasses the people who most need it," said Dana Johnson, the senior director of strategy and federal policy for WE ACT for Environmental Justice.

[President Joe Biden](#) set a goal of directing 40% of the benefits from federal investments in infrastructure, clean energy, and other climate-related programs to areas that are "marginalized, underserved and overburdened by pollution." That initiative, called Justice40, could direct grants from [dozens of federal agencies](#) to historically neglected areas.

Environmental justice advocates have cheered the administration for introducing the initiative, the first of its kind at the federal level. But they worry that the criteria that determines which communities qualify might be too broad and lead to federal grant money bypassing those most in need.

Those concerns have grown after the White House made changes to the screening tool last year, which were intended to address criticisms that the first version of the tool left out too many distressed areas. [Advocates complained](#) that the initial release failed to include Appalachian areas with abandoned coal mines, vast stretches of Alaska or places with multiple environmental and health threats.

To learn more, [go here](#).

Legislative Updates from USAging, national association of Area Agencies on Aging

- The President's budget was released Thursday. Full details aren't yet available, but there is some good news for our top OAA priorities in this budget. (See below for my draft of the newsletter article that will go out later this morning to USAging members.)
- There is interest in the Senate on addressing the health care and direct care workforces. This month, USAging met with staffers in the Senate Special Committee on Aging to discuss current and future congressional efforts aligned with USAging priorities and those of our members. We've endorsed several bills so far in the 118th Congress: The HCBS Access Act would provide parity for HCBS within Medicaid (meaning institutional care isn't the only guaranteed option) and the Better Care, Better Jobs Act (S. 100) is a \$300 billion investment in the HCBS workforce to increase access to services. There's also a new Long-Term Care Caucus that's forming in the House that hopes to improve access to services and overall allow older adults to age well at home and in their communities. Finally, we will be responding to a Senate HELP Committee Request for Information on how they can address health care workforce shortages: we plan to advocate that their future legislation include aging and direct care workers, as well as acute health care workers!



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New bills for consideration

Preliminary discussion of these bills on 3/6/23

[SB23-064](#) – Continue Office of Guardianship (discussion to support)

[SB23-172](#) – Protecting Opportunities and Workers’ Rights Act (discussion to oppose)

[SB23-177](#) – 2023 CO Water Conservation Board Water Projects Appropriations (probably not PPAGC issue)

[SB23-178](#) – Water-wise Landscaping in HOA Communities (probably not PPAGC issue)

[HB23-1221](#) – Water Quality Standards (probably not PPAGC issue)

Priority Bills

Bill #	Title	Position	Status	Hearing
HB23-1052	Mod Prop Tax Exemption for Veterans With Disab	Support	Passed House; Assigned to Senate State Affairs	Not yet scheduled
HB23-1075	Wildfire Evacuation and Clearance Time Modeling	Amend	Awaiting hearing in House Agriculture	03/13/23 @ 1:30PM
HB23-1101	Ozone Season Transit Grant Program Flexibility	Monitor	Passed House; Assigned Passed Senate Transportation and second reading; Awaiting final vote in the Senate.	03/11/23 @ 10AM
HB23-1184	Low-income Housing Property Tax Exemptions	Support	Passed House Transportation, Housing & Local Govt and Finance; Referred to Appropriations	3/6/23 @ 1:30
HB23-1210	Carbon Management	Monitor Revisit on 3/13/23	Passed House Energy & Environment; referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
SB23-016	Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Measures	Amend	Passed Senate Trans & Energy and Finance. Awaiting hearing in House Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
SB23-036	Veterans with Disab Prop Tax Exemption Reqmnts	Support	Passed Senate; Assigned to House State Affairs	03/16/23 @ 10:00
SB23-059	State Parks and Wildlife Area Local Access Funding	Support	Remains in Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources	03/16/23 @ 1:30

SB23-108	Allowing Temporary Reductions in Property Tax Due	Monitor	Passed Senate; Awaiting House assignment	Not yet scheduled
SB23-111	Public Employees' Workplace Protection	Oppose	Passed Senate Local Govt, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
SB23-161	Financing to purchase Firefighting Aircraft	Support	Passed Senate Finance, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
SB23-166	Establishment of a Wildfire Resiliency Code Board	Amend	Assigned to Senate Local Govt & Housing	03/16/23 @ 10:00

Full list of bills

<https://app.coloradocapitolwatch.com/bill-tracker-votes/0/6512/2023/0/>