



Pikes Peak Area  
Council of Governments  
Communities Working Together

**MEETING AGENDA**  
**PPACG LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**  
**April 10, 2023, 8:30 a.m.**

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

[www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting](https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/join-a-meeting)

Meeting ID: 249 310 593 349

Passcode: JXqZEa

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. Federal update
  - A. National Association of Regional Councils (Handout only) ☒
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 transportation update provided by the National Association of Regional Councils

## CONGRESS

*The House and Senate are not in session. They return Monday, April 17.*

### [Graves and Rouzer Lead GOP Effort to Send Resolution to Overturn WOTUS Rule to Biden's Desk](#)

On Thursday, March 30, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO), Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Chairman David Rouzer (R-NC), and other Committee Members joined Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) for a bill signing ceremony for a resolution to overturn the Biden Administration's flawed, costly, and burdensome "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) rule. If implemented, the Biden WOTUS rule would lead to a sweeping expansion of the federal government's authority to regulate what is considered a navigable water, with enormous impacts on small businesses, manufacturers, farmers, home and infrastructure builders, local communities, water districts, and private property owners. Chairmen Graves and Rouzer introduced the resolution in the House of Representatives, and it was [approved](#) on March 9. Environment and Public Works Ranking Member Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) led the effort in the Senate where the resolution also [passed](#) in bipartisan fashion on March 29. It now awaits President Biden's signature.

### [House Republicans Pass H.R. 1, the Lower Energy Costs Act](#)

The House on Thursday approved a sprawling energy package that seeks to undo virtually all of President Biden's agenda to [address climate change](#), with four Democrats joining Republicans in voting for passage. [The bill](#) would sharply increase domestic production of oil, natural gas and coal, and ease permitting restrictions that delay pipelines, refineries and other projects. It also would boost production of critical minerals such as lithium, nickel and cobalt that are used in products such as electric vehicles, computers and cellphones. Mr. Biden has threatened to veto the energy bill if it reaches his desk, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York called it "dead on arrival" in the Democratic-controlled Senate.

### **Debt Ceiling: Is an Agreement Possible?**

As the day of reckoning gets closer, many in Congress are becoming increasingly concerned that an agreement to raise or suspend the debt ceiling may be out of reach. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), if the debt limit is not raised or suspended, the government's ability to issue new debt will be exhausted between July and September 2023. At this point the federal government would be forced to default on its obligations.

Last week, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) sent President Biden a letter calling on the president to pick a date to continue talks over raising the federal government's \$31.4 trillion debt limit before the government is forced to default. As part of his letter, McCarthy identified five broad demands: reducing excessive non-defense spending; reclaiming unspent covid funds; strengthening work requirements for entitlement programs like Medicaid and food stamps; enacting measures to lower energy costs; and securing the border from the flow of fentanyl.

Despite the letter and the appearance of unity, the [New York Times](#) reported that new divisions among Republicans may be making an agreement with the White House difficult. House members remain divided over the need for a balanced budget, and which programs should be cut and by how much. Representative Patrick T. McHenry (R-NC), who is the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, said of raising the debt ceiling, "I don't see how we get there...I don't even see a path." He added, "I've never been more pessimistic about where we stand with the debt ceiling, and we've been in some bad situations before." [Bloomberg Government](#) reported that the energy bill that just passed the House (see below) could become a negotiating tool to reach an agreement between the House and the White House.

Numerous other publications, including CQ Morning Briefing, The Hill, Politico Pro, and Roll Call, reported that

House Republicans are prepared to come up with their own bill that would increase the debt limit if President Biden does not negotiate with them in the very near future. According to CQ Morning Briefing, "Speaker McCarthy has said if Biden doesn't reverse course soon, Republicans are coalescing around a debt limit bill they could bring to the floor that would reflect the positions outlined in his letter to the president this week."

In the meantime, members of the [Problem Solvers Caucus](#), a bipartisan group in the House of Representatives, are attempting to come up with a way to raise the debt ceiling that is acceptable to a majority of House Democrats and Republicans, the Senate, and the White House.

The White House stated that Republicans must pass a clean debt ceiling bill before the government's borrowing power runs out, a position they have held since the debt ceiling became a major issue, and the Problem Solvers Caucus should end its efforts to come up with an alternative solution. President Biden expressed his hope that House Republicans would submit their formal proposal before the Easter Recess, which has already begun.

### **HR1: House Republican's Signature Legislation Seeks to Expedite Access to Drilling and Mining**

By a vote of 225 to 204, the House of Representatives adopted [H.R.1, the "Lower Energy Costs Act"](#) on Thursday, March 30, just before recessing for the Easter and Passover holidays. The bill combined several individual energy-related proposals developed by the Energy and Commerce, Natural Resources, and Transportation and Infrastructure Committees.

The bill would provide for the exploration, development, importation, and exportation of energy resources such as oil, gas, and minerals. If adopted, it would expedite energy projects, eliminate, or reduce certain fees related to the development of federal energy resources, and eliminate certain funds that provide incentives to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases.

To achieve its goals, the bill would waive environmental review requirements under certain environmental laws; eliminate certain restrictions on the import and export of oil and natural gas; and prohibit the president from declaring a moratorium on the use of "fracking" or hydraulic fracturing to drill for oil and gas. It would direct the Interior Department to conduct sales of oil and gas resources on public lands and waters; reduce certain fees related to the development of federal energy resources; and eliminate certain funds that provide incentives to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. It would also limit the authority of the President and executive agencies to restrict or delay the development of energy on federal land.

The bill was met with opposition from Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) because it would repeal many of the climate related programs that Congress approved in the Inflation Reduction Act and expand significantly drilling and mining on federal lands. Among other things, the bill would eliminate the \$27 billion "green bank" that would fund investments in low- and zero-carbon projects, and the energy rebate programs that would fund efficiency improvements in buildings as well as the greenhouse gas reduction fund. The White House has indicated that the president will veto the bill should it make it to his desk in its current form.

### **Bipartisan Legislation Reintroduced to Fund Next Generation 911 Systems**

According to the [National Association of Counties](#) (NACo), a [bipartisan bill](#) to modernize aging 911 systems with Next-Generation 911 technology was introduced on March 24 by Reps. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) and Richard Hudson (R-N.C.). According to NACo, the bill if enacted, would establish a \$15 billion Next Generation 911 implementation grant program that would be overseen by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to move 911 facilities from analog to digital technology. As drafted now, eligible entities would be limited to states and tribes. However, the bill would require that there be coordination with local governments and connected to the emergency communications centers located within cities and counties. Implementation of this program should ensure that state emergency communications centers work closely with their city and county counterparts.

## CHIPS Act Challenge for State and Local Governments

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) of the Commerce Department announced that a new grant program that is designed to incentivize state and local governments to move to create computer chip commercial fabrication facilities. According to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), statements of interest from all potential applicants will be accepted on a rolling basis through April and June depending on the type of application submitted. More information about the NIST grant program and this NOFO can be found on [Route 50](#), and on the [NIST site](#).

## ADMINISTRATION

### [Biden-Harris Administration Announce Funding for 37 Projects to Improve Safety, Fix Old, and Leaky Gas Pipes](#)

U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) will announce \$196 million in grants for 37 projects spread across 19 states. This new grant program helps improve public safety, protect public health, and reduce methane emissions from natural gas distribution pipes. The Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization (NGDISM) grant program, established by President Biden's historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides nearly \$1 billion in funding over the course of five years to modernize municipally and community-owned natural gas distribution pipes, helping to keep communities across the country safe from pipeline leaks. These grants will repair, replace, or rehabilitate nearly 270 miles of pipe, thereby reducing methane emissions by approximately 212 metric tons, annually.

### [Biden-Harris Administration Launches First-Ever Program to Improve Safety on America's Roadways by Preventing Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions](#)

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced details for the first-of-its-kind pilot program to make roads safer, prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions, and improve habitat connectivity. The program will be administered by the Federal Highway Administration, making grant funding available to states and communities to construct wildlife crossings over or below busy roads, add warning signs for drivers, acquire mapping and tracking tools, and more. Wildlife vehicle collisions are a clear safety issue, especially in rural areas. Each year in the United States, roughly 200 people are killed, and many more are injured, in more than one million collisions involving wildlife and vehicles. Through the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program, DOT is taking the unprecedented step of dedicating funding for wildlife crossing projects that will make our roads safer, making a total of \$350 million available over five years, including more than \$111 million in grants through its first round of awards funding this year.

### [Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$20 Million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding to Modernize 29 Airport Control Towers Across the U.S.](#)

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will award \$20 Million from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to 29 airport owned traffic control towers across the U.S. The funding will be used to upgrade and build control towers in small towns and at regional airports. This funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law goes to smaller and regional airports to help improve safety, lower costs and support local businesses. The funding will support important aviation operations such as commercial services, emergency services, agricultural aviation, flight training, and shipping of goods. A [full list of all grants](#) being awarded is available on the FAA website.

### [New Electric Vehicle Credit Rules Set](#)

The Treasury Department laid out specifics on how automakers can certify whether their electric cars qualify for new subsidies of up to \$7,500 enacted in last year's climate spending package. The new [guidance](#) released last Friday largely stays the course with what Treasury telegraphed in a "white paper" late last year on sourcing requirements intended to force supply chains out of China. It's set to be formally published April 17, meaning new rules that could reduce the number of vehicle models that qualify for the full \$7,500 will take effect the following

day. The roughly two-week delay will give auto manufacturers time to figure out if their electric vehicles qualify under the new guidance, enabling them to certify sourcing and price information so consumers know which models can get the government-provided discount. Currently, 37 makes and models of all-electric cars and plug-in hybrids from 13 manufacturers are [listed on an Energy Department website](#) as options for subsidized purchases by consumers who meet the law's income requirements. That list will be updated April 18 when the proposed rule takes effect, though changes could still be made in a final rule after the 60-day public comment period.

### [Biden-Harris Administration Requests Input on Upcoming Digital Equity Programs](#)

The Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced they are seeking input on how to structure nearly \$2.7 billion in grant programs under NTIA's Internet for All initiative. The Digital Equity Act's \$1.44 billion State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and the \$1.25 billion Competitive Digital Equity Program aim to promote adoption and meaningful use of the internet among underrepresented communities and populations, including low-income households, veterans, aging individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, rural residents, and others. The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program will fund implementation of state and territories' digital equity plans, which will identify barriers in communities to achieving full participation in the digital economy, and strategies to overcome those barriers. The Competitive Digital Equity Program will fund organizations including schools, libraries, non-profits, and others offering digital inclusion activities and promoting Internet adoption. NTIA will establish the Competitive Digital Equity Program after it begins awarding funds from the State Capacity Grant Program. The request for comment will be available on [regulations.gov](#). Comments are due 60 days from publication in the Federal Register, or on May 1, 2023, 5:00 PM EST. Additional information can be found [here](#).



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**New bills for consideration**

[HB23-1272](#) – Tax Policy that Advances Decarbonization (Passed H Energy & Environment, referred to Finance. Not yet scheduled – Homework item for 4/10/23)

[HB23-1273](#) – Creation of Wildfire Resilient Homes Grant Program (Homework item for 4/10/23)

[SB23-268](#) – Ten-year Transportation Plan Information (S Transportation 04/12/23 @ 1:3-pm)

**Priority Bills**

Bill #	Title	Position	Status	Hearing
<a href="#">HB23-1052</a>	Mod Prop Tax Exemption for Veterans with Disabilities	Support	Passed House; Assigned to Senate State Affairs	04/06/23 @ 1:30PM
<a href="#">HB23-1075</a>	Wildfire Evacuation and Clearance Time Modeling	Amend	Passed House Agriculture Committee, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
<a href="#">HB23-1101</a>	Ozone Season Transit Grant Program Flexibility	Amend	Passed House; Passed Senate, Second Conference Committee being appointed	Rejected first report of the first conference committee.
<a href="#">HB23-1184</a>	Low-income Housing Property Tax Exemptions	Support	Passed House Transportation, Housing & Local Govt and Finance; Passed Appropriations; Awaiting second reading	04/04/23 @ 10AM
<a href="#">SB23-016</a>	Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Measures	Amend	Amended, Passed Senate Trans & Energy and Finance. Referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
<a href="#">SB23-036</a>	Veterans with Disabilities Prop Tax Exemption Requirements	Support	Passed Senate; Passed House State Affairs, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
<a href="#">SB23-059</a>	State Parks and Wildlife Area Local Access Funding	Support	Amended, Passed Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources and Finance, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
<a href="#">SB23-108</a>	Allowing Temporary Reductions in Property Tax Due	Monitor	Passed Senate; Assigned to House Finance	Not yet scheduled

<a href="#">SB23-111</a>	Public Employees' Workplace Protection	Oppose	Amended, Passed Senate Local Govt, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
<a href="#">SB23-161</a>	Financing to purchase Firefighting Aircraft	Support	Passed Senate Finance, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
<a href="#">SB23-166</a>	Establishment of a Wildfire Resiliency Code Board	Amend	Amended, Passed Senate Local Govt & Housing, referred to Appropriations	Not yet scheduled
<a href="#">SB23-172</a>	Protecting Opportunities and Workers' Rights Act	Oppose	Assigned to Senate Judiciary	04/05/23 @ 1:30PM
<a href="#">SB23-213</a>	Land Use	Oppose	Assigned to Senate Local Government	04/06/23 @ 10AM
<a href="#">SB23-214</a>	Long Bill	Monitor for PPAGC Priority Issues	Passed Senate; Assigned to House Appropriations	Not yet scheduled

**Full list of bills**

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