



NEWS RELEASE

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Commissioners Mike Hammond, Amy Broyles and Jeff Ownby bring county government priority issues to Capitol Hill

Joins more than 1,500 county officials at 2014 NACo Legislative Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Commissioners Mike Hammond, Amy Broyles, and Jeff Ownby represented the county’s interests in the nation’s capital during the National Association of Counties’ (NACo) 2014 Legislative Conference, March 1-5, in Washington, D.C. Commissioner Hammond serves on the NACo Telecommunications Steering Committee and Commissioner Broyles serves on the NACo Energy, Environment and Land Use Steering Committee. This was Commissioner Ownby’s first experience at a NACo Legislative Conference.

More than 1,500 county officials from across the country demonstrated to Congress and federal officials that the nation’s 3,069 county governments provide the essential building blocks to create healthy, vibrant and safe communities. This includes key public infrastructure, transportation and economic development; creating and sustaining a skilled workforce; ensuring public health and public safety and implementing federal, state and local programs in a cost-effective manner.

The focus of this year’s conference was transportation. NACo members urged Congress to pass a multi-year surface transportation bill this year that provides long-term funding certainty for transportation infrastructure. A two-year surface transportation bill known “MAP-21” which supports many county surface transportation priorities expires in September. To help make the case for a long-term bill, NACo released *The Road Ahead: County Transportation Funding and Financing*, an analysis of county transportation funding sources, challenges and solutions across the 48 states with county governments.

On March 4, NACo leaders and members rallied in support of the transportation bill at the Capitol Visitor Center joined by a half-dozen members of Congress. Participating were Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.), Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wisc.), Rep. Bill Foster (D-Ill.), Rep. Jeff Denham (R-Calif.), Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) and Rep. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.).

“Whether you’re talking about transportation, housing and economic development, health care or justice and public safety, it’s important that Congress and federal officials hear directly from county officials about how we can work together to effectively serve the public,” Commissioner Hammond said. Commissioner Ownby remarked, “Our county’s membership and active involvement in NACo makes that not only possible but highly effective. NACo and its strong voice are well respected in Washington.” “I have been diligently working on transportation issues and funding here in Knox County for several years, and am delighted it was the focus of this year’s Legislative Conference”, adds Commissioner Broyles.

During the conference, NACo leadership and members met with dozens key Congressional and House and Senate committee offices to discuss common challenges and offered to work collaboratively with their federal partners to meet the needs of the American people.

In addition to carrying the county government message to Capitol Hill, county officials participated in a variety of educational workshops, including:

Moving Beyond the Theory - Practical Approaches to Effective Policy Development and Implementation, Innovative Transportation and Infrastructure Financing, Using Technology to Create Smarter Communities, and Advancing Economic Resilience through Workforce Preparedness Efforts.

Commissioner Broyles also attended NACo’s Immigration Reform Task Force, and Arts and Cultural Commission Meetings and continues to work with “Women of NACo”.

NACo President Linda Langston, supervisor, Linn County, Iowa, said counties are important because the programs and services provided by counties touch the lives of virtually every American.

“If you vote, drive to work, take the bus, get a flu shot, visit the library, go to the hospital, eat at a restaurant, play in the park, recycle, or call 911– you are interacting with your county government,” Langston said. “It’s important that our federal representatives are reminded of that.”

Langston said she would like the public to learn more about *Why Counties Matter* by viewing a short video and other information about the important roles counties play in American communities and the U.S. economy.

Also during the Legislative Conference, participating county officials heard from national leaders on issues important to counties and communities, including Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), **Sec. Shaun Donovan**, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; **Sec. Sally Jewell**, U.S. Department of Interior and **Sec. Anthony Foxx**, U.S. Department of Transportation. See summary of remarks below.

For comprehensive coverage of the 2014 Legislative Conference, visit *County News* online at: <http://www.naco.org/newsroom/countynews/Pages/NACo-Conference-Daily.aspx>

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo assists America’s 3,069 counties in pursuing excellence in public service to produce healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient counties. NACo promotes sound public policies, fosters county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. More information at: www.naco.org.