



SACOG Board of Directors

Meeting Date: December 20, 2018

Agenda Item No. 2018-December-**21**

Federal Advocacy Update

Receive and File

Prepared by: Christina Lokke

Approved by: James Corless

Attachments: No

1. Issue:

Federal advocacy update

2. Recommendation:

None, this item is for information only.

3. Background/Analysis:

As Washington prepares for a new Congress in 2019, the current Congress has a number of outstanding issues it must still address.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

The November 2018, election resulted in a change of party leadership for the House of Representatives, with the Democrats winning enough seats to take over leadership. In the Senate, Republicans maintained control. The 116th Congress will be sworn in on January 3, 2019.

Since Election Day, Senators and Representatives from both parties have voted for their leaders. In the Senate, leadership remains consistent with Republicans reelecting Senator Mitch McConnell as majority leader and Senate Democrats reelecting Senator Charles Schumer as minority leader. House Republicans voted for California Representative Kevin McCarthy as their new leader to replace retiring Speaker Paul Ryan. House Democrats nominated California Representative Nancy Pelosi for House speaker by a vote of 203-32. However, she will likely need to gather more support before the floor vote for Speaker in January 2019. In order to be elected Speaker, she must receive the support of a majority of all members present and voting, which means she could potentially need as many as 218 votes.

With the elections over, Congress has several major issues to focus on before the end of the year. The House and Senate continue budget discussions for the Fiscal Year 2019 budget. The current fiscal year started in October 2018, without a full budget agreement and with a number of appropriation bills remaining, including the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) appropriation bill. This bill includes funding levels for all discretionary transportation programs, including the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program and Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants.

The President previously signed a continuing resolution to extend government funding in the new fiscal year through December 7, 2018, for the federal agencies awaiting appropriations. On December 6, 2018, Congress voted for another continuing resolution, funding the government through December 21, 2018. The measure also includes a two-week extension of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which was set to expire on December 7, 2018.

Congress appears to have reached an agreement on a new farm bill to replace the now expired 2014 farm bill. As of this writing, Congressional leaders have not yet released any details; however, it appears that the agreement will not include the House's proposed work requirements and other controversial changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Due to the legislative calendar, the proposal might have to be included as part of the final budget package. However, it is not known if the President will support the final proposal.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

This item has no direct fiscal impact.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Goals:

9 - Better Connect & Communicate with Members & Regional Electeds