



2016 (FY17) FEDERAL PRIORITIES FOR NC COUNTIES: *A Quick Guide to Our Issues*

Support Remote Sales Tax Collection (Marketplace Fairness Act) - North Carolina and its counties are losing hundreds of millions of dollars annually in sales tax revenues through untaxed remote sales. Collecting remote sales taxes is neither a new tax nor a tax increase; these revenues are actually already due and payable by law.

Oppose Unfunded Mandates to Counties - Reductions in federal spending and deficits should not be accomplished by shifting costs to counties, imposing unfunded mandates, or pre-empting county programs and taxing authority. NC counties oppose any legislative or regulatory initiatives that undermine local government decision making authority and contribute to reductions to the economic prosperity and workforce of NC's counties.

Protect Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Social Services Block Grants, Food and Nutrition Service Programs, and the Public Health Fund - Counties are the first responders providing health and human services to the public and, in particular, our nation's vulnerable populations – children, elderly and the chronically ill. Many of these services are also mandated by federal law and therefore the federal government provides funding to assist states and local communities in meeting the demand for these services. The populations that these programs help serve do not diminish with reductions in, or elimination of, federal assistance, and thus counties are forced to make up the difference.

Support Federal Funding for Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools; Cooperative Extension Programs; Broadband Access in Rural Areas; Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); and Set-Asides for County Infrastructure Projects - In both rural and urban areas, NC counties throughout the state rely on the federal-local partnership that supports community and economic development and public infrastructure. In recent years, the partnership, and the economic vitality of NC counties, has been threatened when efforts to trim the federal budget have targeted these local government programs.

Support Realistic, Fair, and Enforceable Immigration Reform - While immigration is a federal responsibility, counties are directly affected by immigration. Counties are required by law to provide emergency health, free elementary and secondary education, and public safety to everyone regardless of immigration status. NC counties request that Congress address and pass reasonable reforms to US immigration policy that will better assist counties in delivering services to citizens.

Repeal Expansion of Federal Control Under the Clean Water Act - NC counties call on Congress to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army

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Corps of Engineers (USACE) to withdraw the new “Waters of the U.S.” (WOTUS) rule and rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments. NC counties own water quality systems and other infrastructure like roadside ditches, stormwater systems, green infrastructure and drinking water facilities that should be excluded from the WOTUS definition under the federal Clean Water Act. If left in place as is, this rule will substantially increase the cost of permitting and cause significant harm to farmers, businesses and landowners.

Preserve Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds - Tax-exempt bonds were written in the first tax code in 1913 and are a well-established financing tool. They are predominantly issued by state and local governments, which are responsible for 75% of all public facilities and infrastructure. The interest exemption incentivizes investors to finance these securities. Without the exemption, the expense of financing capital needs will increase sharply, prohibiting the construction of many infrastructure projects and leading to additional state and local taxes.

Support Increased Funding for Military and Veterans Programs, Including Impact Aid and Support Services for Veterans - North Carolina is proud to be one of the most military and veteran friendly states in the nation. With that distinction, however, also comes responsibility to care for the men, women and their families while they bravely serve and when they return. NC counties cannot afford to bear that responsibility alone.

Support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and its State Assistance Program - The LWCF is paid for with fees and permits from Outer Continental Shelf drilling. A portion of these funds are reinvested in state and local parks and outdoor recreation through the State Assistance Program. Even though the LWCF has a dedicated funding source, it receives far less annually than authorization levels allow because the funding is diverted to other purposes outside of what the law intended. NC counties welcomed the FY16 increase in federal funding for “stateside” and support maintaining that funding level again in FY17.

Support the Field EMS Innovation Act - NC counties support legislation (H.R. 2366) that amends the Public Health Service Act to designate the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as the primary federal agency for emergency medical services (EMS) and trauma care. It also establishes the Office of EMS and Trauma within HHS; gives the agency responsibilities related to EMS; and creates a grant program to improve field EMS agency readiness and field EMS education programs.

Support Legislation to End Human Trafficking - According to the U.S. Government, thousands of women, men and children are trafficked to the United States for purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. An unknown number of U.S. citizens and legal residents are trafficked within the country, too, and the State of North Carolina is no exception. NC counties support legislation that takes action against human trafficking.

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