



MEDIA RELEASE

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Karen Skoog participates in NACo's Legislative Conference *Administration and congressional leaders underscore county role in serving residents*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Commissioner Skoog joined nearly 2,000 county leaders in Washington, D.C. for the National Association of Counties (NACo) annual Legislative Conference March 3-7. Attendees met with members of the Trump administration and Congress on key issues like disaster preparedness and response, the opioid epidemic, addressing multigenerational poverty and revitalizing American infrastructure.

“I see the importance of communicating directly with our Congressional delegation and agency representatives,” Skoog said. “Establishing relationships is important to getting our message across and for access when we need a problem addressed.”

In meetings with lawmakers and administration officials, county leaders outlined [several key federal policy priorities](#) including:

- Advocating for a federal infrastructure package that reinvests in our communities
- Supporting the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs that honor federal commitments to public lands counties
- Protecting the federal-state-local partnership for Medicaid
- Supporting poverty prevention and reduction programs, and
- Addressing the opioid epidemic.

As part of its policy advocacy, NACo launched the “[Counties Build](#)” campaign to illustrate counties’ vast role in advancing America’s infrastructure.

Counties officials were very active on Capitol Hill, meeting with senators and representatives. Commissioner Skoog joined other Washington state county leaders in advocating for issues that affect our counties.

Dozens of county officials also rallied at a [press conference](#) with a bipartisan group of congressional leaders to underscore support for key public lands programs, Secure Rural Schools and Payments in Lieu of Taxes. The press conference included U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Derek Kilmer, Paul Gosar, Suzanne Bonamici, Jaime Herrera Beutler and Greg Gianforte. Commissioner Skoog reminded those in attendance that you need to drive on a county road to get to federally managed public lands.

There were several business meetings Skoog attended and participated in including Western Interstate Region, Rural Action Caucus, and Public Lands Steering Committee which covered a variety of issues

including wildfires, rural economic development, tourism in the west, Endangered Species Act, opioid use in rural areas, and streamlining BLM and USFS.

“Committee meetings are where you are able to ask more questions and make connections with other counties that are working on similar issues,” Skoog said. “There are always very informative presentations with opportunity to speak directly with the agency directors and presenters.”

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The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (NACo) unites America’s 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public’s understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. More information at: www.naco.org.