

EPA's Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) and Small Communities Advisory Subcommittee (SCAS)

June 23rd and 24th, 2022

Business Items

- June 23rd and 24th Meeting Agendas
- Draft Recommendations from Environmental Justice Workgroup
- Draft Recommendations from Air and Climate Workgroup
- Draft Recommendations from Healthy Communities Workgroup
- Draft Recommendations from America's Waters and Infrastructure Workgroup
- Draft Recommendations from the SCAS on Implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Member Information

- LGAC Member Biographies
- SCAS Member Biographies

Local Government Advisory Committee

Public Meeting Agenda -- All times in Eastern Daylight Time

Thursday, June 23

Zoom Access: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/j/1612479666>; Meeting ID: 161 247 9666;
Find your local number: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/u/aiNTZBvNd>

Physical Location: William Ruckelshaus Conference Center (Room B150), EPA Headquarters,
1201 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC

- 8:30am **Call to Order LGAC Meeting**
Opening Remarks and Roll Call
Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, LGAC Chair
- 8:45am **Welcoming Remarks and Discussion**
Janet McCabe, EPA Deputy Administrator
- 9:15am **Presentation of Recommendations: Environmental Justice**
Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham, Environmental Justice Workgroup Chair
- 9:30am **Discussion of Recommendations**
Facilitated by Mayor Deana Holiday Ingraham, Environmental Justice Workgroup Chair
Robin Morris Collin, EPA Senior Advisor to the Administrator for Environmental Justice
- 10:00am **Presentation of Recommendations: Air and Climate Workgroup**
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, Air & Climate Workgroup Chair
- 10:15am **Discussion of Recommendations**
Facilitated by Mayor Jim Brainard, Air & Climate Workgroup Vice-Chair
Victoria Arroyo, EPA Associate Administrator for Policy
- 10:45am **Break**
- 11:00am **EPA Policy Updates**
Matt Klasen, EPA PFAS Council Manager and Grant Cope, EPA Senior Counselor to the Administrator
- 11:10am **Presentation of Recommendations: Healthy Communities Workgroup**
Miki Esposito, Healthy Communities Workgroup Vice-Chair
- 11:20am **Discussion of Recommendations**
Facilitated by Lisa Wong, LGAC Vice-Chair
- 12:00pm **Lunch**
- 1:30pm **Presentation of Recommendations: America's Waters and Infrastructure Workgroup**
Gary Brown, America's Waters and Infrastructure Workgroup Vice-Chair
- 1:45pm **Discussion of Recommendations**
Facilitated by Gary Brown, America's Waters and Infrastructure Workgroup Vice-Chair
Karen Dettmer, Managing Director for Infrastructure Implementation for EPA Office of Water

- 2:15pm **Public Comment**
Facilitated by Lisa Wong, LGAC Vice-Chair
- 2:30pm **Vote on Recommendations**
Facilitated by Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, LGAC Chair
- 2:55pm **Closing Remarks and Next Steps**
Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, LGAC Chair
- 3:00pm **Meeting Closed**
Paige Lieberman, Designated Federal Officer
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Small Communities Advisory Subcommittee

Public Meeting Agenda -- All times in Eastern Daylight Time

Friday, June 24

Zoom Access: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/j/1617974160>; Meeting ID: 161 797 4160;
Find your local number: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/u/azSBhsQnv>

Physical Location: William Ruckelshaus Conference Center (Room B150), EPA Headquarters,
1201 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC

- 8:30am **Call to Order SCAS Meeting**
Opening Remarks and Roll Call
Commissioner Christine Lowery, SCAS Chair
- 8:40am **Welcoming Remarks and Response**
William Niebling, EPA Associate Administrator for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations
- 8:45am **Update on Current Draft Recommendations**
Commissioner Christine Lowery, SCAS Chair
- 8:50am **Member Discussion on Recommendations**
Facilitated by Mayor Julian McTizic, SCAS Vice-Chair
- 9:45am **Public Comment**
Facilitated by Mayor Julian McTizic, SCAS Vice-Chair
- 9:55am **Closing Remarks and Next Steps**
Commissioner Christine Lowery, SCAS Chair
- 10:00am **Meeting Closed**
Paige Lieberman, Designated Federal Officer
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Joint Meeting of the Small Communities Advisory Committee and Local Government Advisory Committee

Public Meeting Agenda -- All times in Eastern Daylight Time

Friday, June 24

Zoom Access: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/j/1617974160>; Meeting ID: 161 797 4160;
Find your local number: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/u/azSBhsQnv>

In-person Location: William Ruckelshaus Conference Center (Room B150), EPA Headquarters,
1201 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC

10:30am **Call to Order and Meeting Goals**
Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, LGAC Chair

10:35am **Welcome and Overview**
Jonathan Nelson, EPA Senior Advisor

Panel on Technical Assistance and Local Government

Presentation on technical assistance needs across the country, *Cynthia McCoy, Urban Sustainability Director Network*

Panel participants will be asked to weigh in on the following:

- How can EPA support technical assistance for environmental programs at the local government level, regardless of a community's capacity?
- How can EPA better communicate its available resources, particularly to reach disadvantaged communities?

Panel:

- *Sarah Gimont, National Association of Counties*
- *Carolyn Berndt, National League of Cities*
- *Vern Steel, National Rural Water Association*

11:55am **Closing Remarks and Next Steps**
Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, LGAC Chair

12:00pm **Meeting Closed**
Paige Lieberman, Designated Federal Officer

LGAC Recommendations on Environmental Justice Priorities to EPA

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) applauds the EPA in its elevation of environmental justice and equity issues, and how it has encouraged a whole-of-government approach to combatting historic practices of environmental injustices. Likewise, its development of resources like EJ Screen and the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool will provide a meaningful, data-driven way to support local governments working in their communities.

However, these steps are just the beginning. There is still much work to be done to bridge the gap between community-level environmental justice priorities and federal regulatory policies. The LGAC has identified five recommendations to address, which are further detailed below.

The LGAC recommends:

1. EPA should support local governments working to implement initial zoning and land use policies that address environmental injustice by providing draft language that aids future enforcement. Where collaboration is needed to implement or revise such policies, EPA should play the role of the convener, to encourage collaboration among federal, state, and local authorities in housing, environmental and planning departments.
2. EPA should strongly encourage state governments to include environmental justice and equity principles in its permitting decisions, including meaningfully engaging with any parties impacted by a permit and considering cumulative impacts in any relevant calculations.
3. The LGAC recommends that EPA provide funding and technical assistance to build capacity to address environmental justice in communities across the country. This should include making technical experts readily available to work with communities, providing guidance on how to prioritize projects using a tool like EJSCREEN, and developing a toolbox of environmentally just zoning codes, remapping policies, and permitting ordinances.
4. Where environmental injustice persists, EPA should provide funding and best practices to mitigate harmful effects to local water supply, airsheds, and other sensitive habitats. These practices should include options at various price points and levels of capacity within a local government.
5. The EPA should explore ways to expand programs like the Superfund Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) to other environmental programs, which integrate community groups into the decision-making process by funding an independent technical advisor to provide relevant analysis.

Zoning and Permitting

One of the underlying causes of environmental injustice is zoning. For decades, environmental hazards like fossil fuel storage and transportation sites, hazardous waste facilities, and other chemical factories were disproportionately sited in low-income communities and communities of color. The LGAC is supportive of industry overall, but this support is predicated on the agreement that industry is located a safe distance from residential areas, compliant with all regulations, and ensures adequate prevention of cumulative impacts.

One example is the Greater Houston area in Texas. As of 2019, 21 industrial and toxic waste facilities are located within three miles of the Harrisburg/Manchester neighborhood, which is 90 percent Hispanic.

This includes waste treatment and disposal facilities and other large-quantity generators of hazardous waste.¹ Using satellite data, the Houston Health Department found in 2020 that levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)—linked to higher rates of childhood asthma, increased hospitalizations, and the development of cardiovascular diseases—were 32% higher for Latino residents, 19% higher for Black residents, and between 15% to 28% higher for residents living below the poverty line.²

Another example is East Point, Georgia, a predominantly African American suburb of Atlanta. Within one-half mile of industrial factories are two schools, a recreation center, and dozens of homes. Residents have repeatedly complained of discolored water in the surrounding watersheds and respiratory irritation, caused by the fumes emitting from surrounding industrial operations.

While the local governments have tried to advocate for their resident in both instances, state regulators note that the companies are within their rights under relevant permits and laws. An important step in creating justice for these communities is revising the policies that allowed them to happen, which will require action from federal, state, and local authorities in housing, environmental, and planning departments. Such changes will occur more effectively and efficiently if there is strong intergovernmental collaboration. Local governments sometimes lack the leverage to convene state and federal partners, and the LGAC recommends that EPA step in to play this role where needed.

When working with its federal, state, and local partners, the LGAC encourages EPA to focus on local zoning and land use policies/ordinances in a way that aids enforcement. While some local governments need support drafting language for initial zoning and land use policies/ordinances, throughout the country, local governments need a consistent, proactive enforcement of existing federal and state regulations. Within this challenge is an opportunity to explore ways that local zoning policies can be leveraged in a way that aids enforcement. The LGAC understands that EPA is working with the Environmental Council of States to address some of these issues and offers its expertise at the local government level to bolster this work.

Cumulative Impacts

Another underlying driver of environmental injustice is cumulative impacts. The LGAC supports the EPA’s working definition of cumulative impacts referring to, “the total burden from chemical and non-chemical stressors and their interactions that affect the health, well-being, and quality of life of an individual, community, or population at a given point in time or over a period of time.”

LGAC members have seen the issue of cumulative impacts arise in a range of permitting decisions. Typically, a permit includes a maximum level of allowable air and/or water pollution by an individual entity. However, there is no mechanism in place to track the cumulative pollution being deposited in a community from the various approved permits. Again, an example can be found in Texas. The Houston area has had tremendous growth in recent years, leading to a steady stream of permits for concrete batch plants, and a significant, resulting air pollution of silica dust. Persistent inhalation of silica dust is shown to cause respiratory damage including lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,

¹ Tessum, C. W., Apte, J. S., Goodkind, A. L., Muller, N. Z., Mullins, K. A., Paoletta, D. A., ... & Hill, J. D. (2019). Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial–ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(13), 6001-6006.

² Demetillo, Mary Angelique G. et al. *Observing Nitrogen Dioxide Air Pollution Inequality Using High-Spatial-Resolution Remote Sensing Measurements in Houston, Texas*. August 5, 2020. <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.0c01864>

kidney disease, autoimmune disease, and silicosis. Many community members have organized to address this problem, but since each individual permit is within the allowable threshold, they are told that nothing can be done.

The LGAC recommends that EPA work with state governments to alter how permits are reviewed. Most important is to implement maximum pollution allowances for a given area. This calculation should include the fact that many overburdened communities have historical pollution already in their environment. Other options include requiring consideration of the health impact on minority and low-income populations and requiring meaningful engagement with impacted communities before an environmental permit is issued. This kind of action is not without precedent. The State of New Jersey [enacted such a policy](#) in 2020, which requires the Department of Environmental Protection to assess the public health and environmental risks created for overburdened communities when making any permitting decisions. In April 2022, the State of New York passed a similar law. While the LGAC understands the limitations of guidance, we recommend that EPA work with states to strongly encourage the inclusion of environmental justice and equity principles in its permitting decisions in any way possible. As EPA builds out programs under the BIL, there is an opportunity to integrate these measures from the start.

While the laws in New Jersey and New York are considered a success for environmentalists, they are not without risk. Some communities in New Jersey are concerned about being sued for denying a permit under Title 5 of the Civil Rights Act. The LGAC recommends that EPA engage with these communities, along with its federal partners, to support them as they strive to protect overburdened communities.

Technical Assistance and Funding

For both issues detailed above, EPA can support local governments by providing targeted technical assistance and funding. Much of the work will fall on local governments, and there are significant funding and knowledge gaps to address. The LGAC recommends that EPA provide funding and technical assistance to build this capacity in communities across the country, with an emphasis on overburdened communities. The work of the Justice 40 initiative and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to target at least 40 percent of funding to such communities is a step in the right direction. However, EPA needs to ensure that these goals are closely tracked and met.

The LGAC also recommends that EPA make technical experts on environmental justice readily available to work with communities on complex issues. Where this isn't feasible, the LGAC recommends that EPA develop a toolbox of environmentally just zoning codes, remapping policies, permitting ordinances, and examples on when a community may want to pursue each. For example, EPA could offer guidance to help municipalities prioritize projects using a zoning and remapping process or a tool like EJSCREEN. The EPA should understand that the information available for this work is complex and decentralized, and it can be hard for a community to navigate – especially if they are a small, disadvantaged community. Providing support would help interested communities overcome the administrative hurdle of making these changes.

At the same time, communities need support remediating the impacts of environmental injustice. The LGAC recommends that EPA provide best practices to mitigate harmful effects to local water supply,

airsheds, and other sensitive habitats. These practices should include options at various price points and levels of capacity within a local government. Additionally, EPA should provide funding for buffer zones and other remediation and mitigation strategies to protect residents.

While technical assistance from the federal government is often provided to local governments, with environmental justice there is also a need to support community groups. The Superfund program provides a model for supporting this type of involvement. Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) help communities participate in Superfund cleanup decision-making by funding community groups, who then contract their own technical advisor to interpret and explain technical reports, site conditions, and EPA's proposed actions. The LGAC recommends exploring ways to extend this kind of support on other environmental programs.

Conclusion

The LGAC appreciates the opportunity to work with EPA on this important work, and to develop policies and programs that support meaningful and long-term change. It is critical to the well-being of a community that local, state, and federal government work collaboratively with industry to dismantle systemic environmental injustices and prioritize safety in communities overburdened by pollution.

Local Government Advisory Committee

Air and Climate Workgroup

June 2022

With passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) has focused on how EPA can ensure this investment both improves the nation's infrastructure and addresses climate change.

In February 2022, the Committee provided cross-cutting recommendations for policy and guidance related to the BIL. In this round of recommendations, the LGAC turns to technical assistance and how EPA can support local governments as they plan for, develop, and build infrastructure that also increases a community's climate resilience.

These recommendations were developed by the LGAC's Air and Climate Workgroup and include some crossover with the LGAC's America's Water and Infrastructure Workgroup, who was also charged with providing input on EPA's technical assistance. It is notable that the two groups independently arrived at some of the same conclusions, and the LGAC asks EPA to give these recommendations due consideration.

In developing these recommendations, the LGAC Workgroup on Air and Climate heard from a range of technical staff at EPA's Office of Air and Radiation and Office of Policy. While there are a few gaps in desired resources, which are noted below, the LGAC was pleased to learn about the myriad of technical assistance resources available to local governments. The list of recommendations are further detailed below.

The Air and Climate Workgroup Recommends:

1. EPA should prioritize the development of resources to provide direct technical assistance to communities that want to grow in ways that prepare for and adapt to the changing climate, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and bring other environmental, health, economic, and equity benefits.
2. EPA should develop additional materials to help elected and appointed officials communicate the importance and benefits of addressing climate change.
3. EPA should support communities that want to incorporate climate change and equity into their shovel-ready projects, through direct technical assistance or through materials developed to guide communities.
4. EPA should work with other federal agencies to rejuvenate partnerships with state agencies and to help federal assistance programs build in elements such as community engagement from the start.
5. EPA should ensure that resources that could help local government officials are not only available but are also being marketed and highlighted in ways that allow officials to know about them and use them, including by having regional EPA staff attend statewide and regional conferences for local officials.
6. EPA should work to reduce the barriers to applying for and receiving assistance, particularly in communities that have historically been unable to access federal funds due to capacity issues and, at the same time, ensure that programs and guidance related to those programs emphasize

that historically marginalized communities and community members must be part of all decision-making and benefits associated with EPA and other federal agency investments. EPA should explore funding local groups to provide targeted technical assistance.

7. EPA should streamline application processes for all assistance programs as much as possible or, where streamlining is not possible, give local governments more time and support to apply. EPA should also consider working with other federal agencies to develop a coordinated application system for the entire federal family.
8. EPA Regional Offices should support local governments by helping communities facing similar issues learn from each other and engaging educational institutions and other resources.
9. To help municipalities green their fleets, EPA should educate local governments about the value of investing in cleaner fleets, consider ways to help local governments pay for cleaner vehicles, and facilitate peer-to-peer learning about green fleets on a regional or national level.

Specific Technical Assistance Needed

The most effective technical assistance is the kind that is customized to a community. The ideal scenario would be for EPA to connect with every interested community and walk them through the steps of identifying projects, applying for funding, and administering a program. In developing these recommendations, the LGAC heard from staff in the State and Local Climate Branch and the Office of Policy, including Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) and the Climate Adaptation Program, and was impressed with the comprehensive services they provide to communities interested in increasing their climate resilience. The LGAC recommends expanding these offices and the services they provide, including supporting staff in Regional Offices.

In terms of climate-specific assistance, the LGAC recommends providing additional tools to help elected and appointed officials communicate the importance and benefits of addressing climate change, especially in areas of the country that are resistant to this work. This could include plain language explanations of different types of projects, the suite of benefits they provide in addition to the climate-related benefits (e.g., short- and long-term cost savings, pollution reduction and other environmental and health improvements, new economic opportunities, resilience to the economic impacts of climate change), and why climate action is important for helping both a specific community and the planet.

The LGAC also recommends supporting communities that want to incorporate climate and equity benefits into their shovel-ready projects, as these are often the projects selected when federal funding is made available. There are several models for accomplishing this work. One is for EPA to work with communities to help them develop plans that meet their needs and goals and are created through meaningful public involvement. The communities can have those plans ready to go whenever funding – for transportation, water, or other infrastructure – becomes available. For example, a community that has already developed plans to install street trees, rain gardens, bike lanes, sidewalks and crosswalks, and other amenities along a street will be better prepared to propose those plans when the state transportation department does work on that street. Another option is to revive EPA's support for the Governors' Institute on Community Design, an EPA-funded project that helped governors and their staff make informed decisions about investments and policy decisions that influence the economic health and physical development of their states. By engaging at the state government level, this work cut across sectors and localities to create holistic, regional development policies. The partnerships developed between transportation and environmental departments at the state and local level was

particularly beneficial, and the LGAC recommends that EPA work with DOT and other federal agencies to rejuvenate these partnerships.

Work with DOT and other federal agencies including HUD and USDA could also help revise federal funding at the source so that it is better tailored to communities' needs and contexts. The LGAC recommends that EPA continue its work with other agencies that provide funding to state agencies and local governments to help them build in elements such as community engagement and the realization of multiple benefits from funded projects.

EPA cannot work directly with every community that wants its assistance, so the LGAC recommends that the Agency develop materials that can guide communities in developing projects. These materials should include guidance on getting meaningful input from all parts of the community, especially those that have been historically left out of development decision-making; incorporating climate change projections to ensure that the project will be suited to climate conditions now and through its lifespan; and striving to get multiple benefits out of every dollar spent on infrastructure and development.

The LGAC heard from EPA staff of two additional resources that help communities adapt to the changing climate. The first is the Adaptation Resource Center ([ARC-x](#)). The ARC-x is impressive in the breadth and depth of information and potentially helpful tools for community leaders looking for climate adaptation approaches across environmental media. The LGAC was especially drawn to the templates and examples of common documents needed, which are helpful for communities starting new programs. The LGAC also learned about land use and development policy strategies local governments can use prepare for and adapt to climate change impacts in [Smart Growth Fixes for Climate Adaptation and Resilience](#). The strategies in this publication can build climate resilience while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and bringing multiple short- and long-term environmental, economic, societal, and health benefits.

EPA has many other good materials on how local governments can address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The LGAC would like to see this information shared more broadly and at venues attended by local government officials.

Getting Information to Communities

Where EPA can improve is how it spreads awareness of its resources. Specifically, the LGAC recommends that EPA partner with organizations that work directly with local elected officials at the national and state level. At the national level these include the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the African American Mayors Association. EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations already has relationships with many of these organizations, and the LGAC recommends that EPA Program and Regional Offices also look to these groups as an outreach resource, particularly when targeting large cities.

For small and medium-sized communities, the LGAC recommends working with state municipal leagues and councils of government. The National Association of Counties has state-level associations working directly with county government staff [in 47 out of 50 states](#) and provides an opportunity for widespread outreach at the county level. Beyond that, each state has a range of associations providing services and information to its local governments. Most of these host annual conferences, which are well-attended by elected and appointed officials from across the state. As a first step, the LGAC recommends that EPA Regional Offices request to speak or set up an information table at these conferences and come equipped with information about a range of available resources. Each state calls these groups by a

different name – e.g., Oregon has the League of Oregon Cities and Oregon Mayors Association, while Indiana has Accelerate Indiana Municipalities – and the LGAC is happy to advise on specific points of contact. The LGAC also recommends that EPA use these groups to share information on available resources via their email listservs or publications. In the long term, EPA may want to request feedback from them regarding how the partnership could better meet community needs.

While the aforementioned groups cover all issues impacting local governments, there are also several organizations that support local governments on climate and environmental issues specifically. The workgroup heard from Urban Sustainability Directors Network, C40 Cities, and Climate Mayors as part of developing these recommendations.

Equity

Any effort to build capacity will improve equity by equipping a local government to advocate for more funding on its own. Similarly, simplifying the processes and requirements related to grant applications and management will result in bringing in more communities who need the funding most. Several LGAC members have noted that their governments have turned down funding simply because the reporting requirements were too cumbersome; the staff time to manage them would cost more than the benefits gained by the grant. The LGAC recommends making reporting requirements commensurate with the complexity of the work being completed by the grant.

Ultimately, achieving equity will require new and innovative ways of doing business. One of the most impactful actions EPA can take to promote equity is to make supporting community engagement an allowable cost, including providing oversight and advising on specific projects. The City of Eugene, Oregon, has successfully utilized this model. Understanding that the impacts of climate change tend to disproportionately impact marginalized communities, the City convened a Sustainability Equity Panel comprised of local social justice organizations. The panel looks at climate, transportation and housing policy proposed by the City and advises on whether new projects are sensitive to the needs of marginalized communities. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the City pays panel members for their time and offers free food and childcare. If EPA is serious about improving equity, the LGAC recommends they support this kind of approach, both by including these expenses as allowable costs for grants when possible and encouraging its partners to do the same.

The LGAC supports EPA's commitment to community engagement and equity as reflected in EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The emphasis in the plan upon making inclusive community engagement a standard practice across EPA is welcomed and will increase the likelihood that the benefits of investments accrue to all residents of a community. In particular, we note our support for Objective 2.2 which calls for all EPA programs that work with communities to do so in ways that are community driven, coordinated, and collaborative.

Applying for Assistance

Local governments often lack the internal capacity and staff expertise to navigate the federal funding landscape – even large cities with robust staffs. The Urban Sustainability Directors Network recently surveyed its more than 2,000 members, who represent 254 communities, and found that only 10 to 15 percent feel very informed and equipped to pursue federal funding. The LGAC knows that this challenge is particularly acute for small and mid-sized communities. For a typical public servant, the task of matching a broad array of project needs or strategies in an action plan with available funding options, and then overseeing grant implementation, is overwhelming.

There are many steps EPA and its federal partners can take to ease this process. Providing an online, coordinated application system for the entire federal family would be transformative for local governments. Being able to pull in federal funding opportunities for all aspects of a project in one centralized place would not only lessen the administrative burden of applying for funding but would also support the fact that most municipal projects cut across different federal authorities. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is used by students seeking financial support for higher education, is one successful model to consider. The grants.gov website takes a step in the right direction by cataloguing all available federal government grants, but significant administrative burden for communities remains.

An exemplary effort is happening at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), where Secretary Pete Buttigieg has championed a single Notice of Funding Opportunity to manage \$2 billion in BIL funding. Applicants can access funding for multiple programs through one application and a common set of criteria, which streamlines the funding process for state, regional, and local governments.

In 2009, EPA, DOT and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development tried to develop a joint application through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, but the effort was ultimately unsuccessful. The LGAC recommends pursuing this again and capitalizing on the momentum brought by Secretary Buttigieg, who also championed the idea of a single application for federal assistance as part of his presidential campaign.

Another model to consider is that used by EPA's Office of Community Revitalization, which has strived to simplify the application process for its technical assistance while still getting the information it needs to select recipients. Its [Recreation Economy for Rural Communities technical assistance program](#) uses a Survey 123 form that includes ten open-ended questions about the demographics of the community, the challenges they face, why they believe the assistance will help their community develop, and how they will oversee implementation of strategies developed through the assistance.

Where complex applications cannot be streamlined, the LGAC recommends a few helpful changes. The simplest recommendation is to include points of contact in every funding announcement so that interested applicants can ask detailed questions about the types of projects covered. The LGAC also recommends that each funding opportunity include examples of how past award recipients used the funding and other ways the grant can be used. This information would help staff make the leap from goal to outcome and determine if the funding is right for them. Another recommendation is to offer two rounds for grant applications. The first round would be pre-proposal and would require limited administrative work from applicants. Those who pass this step would then enter a second round, where they would be offered technical assistance to develop their application. This approach would have the potential to bring in new communities and increase the likelihood that if a local government decides to use its limited staff resources on a grant, it will result in a successful and sustainable program.

Finally, the LGAC recommends lengthening application periods for grants, particularly those that are complex and those that reward or require collaboration with partners. The process of getting to a go/no go decision for an application can take months and often involves coordinating multiple partner organizations and funding streams. Providing more time for staff to work through these steps – even if they don't have the full details of the grant from the start – would encourage more communities to pursue them and result in more robust proposals.

Building Regional Capacity

Another way for EPA to address the barrier of capacity is to work at a regional level to convene partnerships and leverage expertise and resources. There is great power in peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges, especially sharing what hasn't worked for a city. EPA Regional Offices are in a great position to connect communities facing similar issues and help them develop mentorships or shared trainings. The LGAC also recommends that EPA think about issues in terms of watersheds and airsheds and consider providing technical assistance to multiple communities at once, rather than having them compete for the same resources.

Regional universities and colleges are another important component of this work. For example, Mayor Jeremy Stutsman worked closely with Indiana University to inventory GHG emissions in his town of Goshen, Indiana, which led to actionable goals for reducing emissions. Faced with chronic flooding, he worked with the Great Lakes Institute of Science to assess what contributes to flooding in his community, what interventions were needed now, and how the city could implement projects that will mitigate flooding for the long term, given climate change projections. Universities are filled with expertise, and examples like this can be found across the country. EPA Regional Offices can support local governments by developing or deepening partnerships with the educational institutions in its area, connecting them with local communities in need, and providing financial support when possible.

Capacity can also be developed through community organizations, nonprofits, and philanthropic organizations which have local expertise, familiarity with local codes and policies, and existing relationships within a community. Technical assistance agreements with the federal government are often awarded to national organizations. While these groups play an important role, the LGAC recommends that EPA explore funding local groups to provide targeted, technical assistance. Supporting these groups would offer multiple benefits, including creating local job opportunities, building capacity in government staff, and strengthening relationships within a community.

Greening Fleets

One area where many communities are lacking technical assistance is the greening of municipal fleets. The transportation sector accounted for more than one quarter of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2020.* Communities across the country are trying to reduce their transportation emissions by investing in municipal fleets of electric, biofuel, propane, and LNG vehicles. However, many more communities are interested but simply lack the time, understanding, and resources to make this change. The LGAC recommends that EPA launch a campaign to educate local governments about the value of making investments that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also improving local air quality and bringing other benefits, including simple fact sheets that compare the lifetime costs of fleets using internal combustion engines versus cleaner options. As mentioned above, working through municipal leagues at the local and state level would be effective in reaching a large range of communities, as would trade groups like the National Association of Fleet Administrators, the Municipal Fleet Managers Association, and the Public Fleet Managers Association. Utilities and electric cooperatives can also be good partners and might have incentive programs for greening municipal fleets; the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association could be helpful in finding coops that are interested in this topic.

* EPA, "Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions," <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.

One common concern in greening fleets, particularly in rural areas, is the perception that the goal of supporting cleaner and more innovative technology means can't be combined with the priority of needing reliable vehicles that require limited maintenance. EPA can play a role here by negotiating bulk purchasing discounts for local governments or offering rebates to local governments who make the switch, like the Clean Bus Program. It could be fruitful for EPA to collaborate with DOT and DOE in encouraging municipal fleets to switch to alternatively fueled vehicles.

The LGAC also recommends that EPA facilitate peer-to-peer learning on green fleets on a regional or national level. Cities are making impressive strides toward carbon neutrality, and EPA can help spread the technology across the country by connecting interested parties. For example, the City of Madison has set a goal of reaching 100 percent renewable energy and zero net carbon emissions for city operations by 2030. To reach this goal, they are transitioning fleet operation to low-carbon vehicles, with over 60 electric vehicles, more than 100 hybrid-electric vehicles, and the first all-electric fire truck operating in service in North America. The City's fleet team has hosted fleet staff from neighboring municipalities to show these vehicles in action and talk with their peers about the pros and cons. These fleet-to-fleet conversations have been very productive in helping spread the word and adoption. Nongovernmental organizations can often help make these connections; for example, Forth Mobility and the Great Plains Institute are two NGOs that are helping communities support electric vehicles.

Conclusion

Through the BIL, the EPA has an opportunity to support communities through capacity building and developing long-term climate resilience. Elected and appointed officials across the country are eager for this work to begin. The LGAC looks forward to working with the EPA as implementation continues.

LGAC Recommendations to Support Local Governments Address PFAS Contamination

Healthy Communities Workgroup

June 2022

The LGAC applauds the efforts that EPA has taken to address the unique challenges posed by PFAS contamination and the development of the [PFAS Strategic Roadmap: EPA's Commitments to Action 2021-2024](#). The complexity of PFAS and its lifecycle of being processed, manufactured, distributed, and disposed is ultimately experienced first-hand at the local level. However, many local governments continue to grapple with the very existence of PFAS as an emerging concern.

The Healthy Communities Workgroup of the LGAC has taken up the charge question: *In October 2021, EPA announced a [PFAS Strategic Roadmap](#), which laid out a whole-of-agency approach to addressing PFAS. This Roadmap includes several regulatory and policy actions regarding PFAS contamination. Given that these processes can take several years, how can EPA support local governments to address PFAS contamination in the interim?*

Understanding that EPA is undertaking an extensive review of PFAS around the U.S., and that environment and health impact evaluations must be appropriately conducted, the Healthy Communities workgroup recognizes that the issue of PFAS pollution will not be solvable overnight. The LGAC has developed a set of recommendations for EPA that will support local governments as they evaluate and address potential PFAS contamination in the near-term.

EPA's Strategic Roadmap frames an integrated approach to address PFAS contamination through efforts to research, restrict, and remediate these "forever chemicals." The LGAC acknowledges the categorical approaches in the Roadmap and has framed its recommendations accordingly. Additionally, we have added a section on communication and coordination, noting the need for local governments to easily access available resources that will effectively communicate this issue to their residents.

The environmental challenges of PFAS vary geographically, including pollution from abandoned landfills, military installations, industrial sites, and more. Despite the need to develop site-specific solutions, all local governments strive to obtain clean air, drinkable water, and economically thriving communities for their residents. Addressing PFAS head-on will support the vision to provide effective environmental protection to communities across the country.

During the 2021 - 2024 timeline, the LGAC recommends that EPA provide this Committee with an update at least every six months on progress towards achieving the actions outlined in the Strategic Roadmap. The LGAC looks forward to working closely with the EPA as this issue evolves.

Research

The emerging concern of PFAS contamination poses a risk at the local level with many factors – some known and some unknown. Members of the LGAC's Healthy Communities workgroup cited many examples where PFAS had been detected or used in their communities. However, some members were unaware of the prevalence of PFAS in their communities and had not been concerned about addressing it up to this point. Therefore, the LGAC recommends that EPA provide comprehensive resources to state

and local governments, so that they can adequately identify and manage PFAS, regardless of the level of capacity and experience they have with this issue.

The LGAC recommends that EPA support local and state jurisdictions by:

- Providing training and funding for conducting environmental assessments and sampling to evaluate potential contamination levels
- Providing a database of laboratory resources available for local governments to use
- Providing background education on potential sources of PFAS contamination

Given current scientific research on PFAS' health impacts, and the resulting actions EPA plans to take in the next several years, the LGAC anticipates public interest in PFAS to accelerate. In many instances, local governments and utilities will be who the public turns to when they question the safety of their water, their land, and their families. These institutions can play a pivotal role in how the challenge of addressing PFAS is met. However, few are equipped to meet that moment without support from the federal government.

Restrict

Proactively preventing more PFAS from entering air, water, and land requires full collaboration and cooperation at the federal, state, and local level. Local governments are often large purchasers of products containing PFAS, such as firefighting foam and food packaging. The LGAC recommends that EPA increase support of voluntary stewardship programs to phase out these products. For example, in communities where there is known PFAS contamination, EPA could incentivize communities to identify the source and require any related manufacturers to switch to alternative products. One area to focus is replacing PFAS-containing firefighting foam with AFFF-free foam, which is a likely source of PFAS contamination in every local government. This type of action would provide nation-wide examples of effective PFAS replacements and increase cooperation from other local governments.

Furthermore, the LGAC recommends that EPA:

- Coordinate with federal agencies such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission, to develop and disseminate information about common sources of PFAS in consumer products, its risk to human health and the environment, and alternative sources for products
- Develop and disseminate information on effective methods of PFAS restrictions that can be used by local and state governments and utilities
- Serve as a convener where multiple federal, state, and/or local government agencies are involved with a contaminated site (i.e. airports, military sites) to develop action plans that identify who can lead each component
- Consult with state and local governments before setting regulatory standards to restrict PFAS

The LGAC understands that EPA intends to develop regulatory standards in the near term and recommends that EPA develop these in partnership with state and local governments. Additionally, when standards are set, the EPA should make efforts to support local governments via an ombudsman role, so that local government can discuss their questions and challenges and access necessary technical assistance without worry of inviting enforcement action.

Remediate

Emerging contaminants like PFAS create many challenges for local jurisdictions. The process of remediation begins with identifying contaminant levels. Areas of potential contamination can be complex to assess, such as ground water, where extensive engineering reviews are required. The LGAC recommends that EPA allocate funding to conduct assessments and remediation in a timely way, and provide guidance for how different funding streams can be utilized to address PFAS

In general, local governments are seeking clarity in standards related to all aspects of its operations. This lack of standards is leading to inconsistent, and in some cases ineffective, remediation of PFAS. For example, a lack of standards for disposing contaminated soil and sediment is leading to rejection for landfills and composting, and/or high disposal fees, which results in stalled operations. Another example is in the biosolid programs, where local wastewater treatment plants face uncertainty in terms of future liability. The LGAC recommends that EPA provide guidance to state and local jurisdictions to remediate all known types of contamination, with an emphasis on proper disposal methods that will limit further environmental impacts.

Communications and Coordination

Local governments are often on the front lines of contamination issues. They are responsible for providing safe drinking water, they help protect public health from environmental exposures to pollution, and they may be responsible for remediation. They must navigate several levels of government to secure the knowledge and resources to address these issues, while also communicating about the risks and their plans with the public. The ability of local governments to play all these roles on an emerging and prevalent contaminant varies greatly, and when staff resources are limited, focusing them on efforts of discovery, mitigation, and remediation, will lead to better public health outcomes.

Additionally, the LGAC recommends that EPA:

- Coordinate via the Regional EPA Offices with states, local governments, and responsible parties, to share information, offer expertise, provide updates on available resources, help establish coordinated action plans amongst all parties, and facilitate their timely implementation.
- Provide local government with FAQs, important communication points for the public, and a playbook of the best immediate and long-term actions a community can take to protect the public when PFAS contamination is discovered in their community.

Local Government Advisory Council

America's Waters and Infrastructure Workgroup

June 2022

As EPA implements the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the technical assistance and other tools needed to ensure success at the local level.

In December 2021, EPA charged the LGAC with several questions related to BIL. In February 2022, the Committee responded with cross-cutting recommendations for policy and guidance, including strategies for prioritizing equity, environmental justice, and the lived experience of those most impacted by water pollution.

In this round of recommendations, the LGAC now turns to technical assistance, and the tools and resources needed to move funding from EPA to a community in an effective and efficient manner. Many of these recommendations go beyond the scope of BIL implementation and should be read as overarching recommendations for EPA's work implementing programs in communities across the United States. These recommendations were developed by the LGAC's America's Waters and Infrastructure Workgroup and include some crossover with the LGAC's Air and Climate Workgroup, which was also charged with providing input on EPA's technical assistance. It is notable that the two groups independently arrived at some of the same conclusions, and the LGAC asks EPA to give these recommendations due consideration.

While these recommendations include specific ideas for technical assistance, the more important issue is shifting the role of EPA in communities and how it engages with partners, which will be addressed first. The LGAC looks forward to continuing a conversation with EPA as the works progresses.

The LGAC has identified the following recommendations, which are further detailed below.

1. The EPA should understand that it is often perceived as the enforcer at the community level and will need to shift that paradigm if it wants to be viewed as a trusted collaborator. This is best accomplished by proactively seeking to meet local government leaders where they are, including but not limited to joining meetings of municipal leagues, trade associations, and other interested parties.
2. The EPA should develop a network of expertise, using models like the Rural Partners Network, AmeriCorps, Community Action Agencies, and West Virginia's Coal Field Community Grants Facilitation Commission as models, and engaging with area universities.
3. The EPA should engage with water industry associations to work directly with water industry employees and contractors who are already ingrained in communities and understand their water infrastructure needs. These groups can be a conduit for sharing information and resources, and collaboratively address major issues in the water industry.
4. The EPA should publicize points of contact for each state's SRF programs on the EPA website, and share this information widely, to reach communities who have never engaged with the State Revolving Fund programs.
5. The EPA should provide technical assistance for communities wishing to engage in the State Revolving Fund programs by providing one-on-one support when possible, as well as a series of easy to access tutorials and templates that a state can point a community to, including guidance

for developing an application and understanding the future impacts that a new infrastructure project places on a community.

6. EPA should partner with public utilities on workforce development recruitment and training specific to EPA programs, to build a sustainable network of technical experts.
7. The LGAC recommends that EPA Regional Offices support regional collaboration, including everything from consolidating utilities within a region, to connecting communities that are dealing with similar issues, so that they can work together and have a bigger impact on a regional level.
8. EPA should work with states to make the process of getting funding from EPA to a community more efficient, and even developing a related metric to encourage state-to-state competition.

Becoming a Trusted Partner

EPA has a tremendous and daunting opportunity to create a system of long-term, technical assistance for water and wastewater services across the United States. To capitalize upon this opportunity, EPA needs to understand how the Agency is perceived at the community level. Local governments typically interact with EPA in one of two ways. The first is through enforcement actions – whether ordering consent decrees or conducting inspections. The second is through grants, for which local governments expend significant resources to apply. In both instances, EPA is often the one saying ‘no’. This is the case regardless of the political leanings of a community, although EPA should also understand that some localities will not be energized to think innovatively about providing technical assistance and reaching new communities.

If EPA wants to be viewed as a trusted collaborator, it first needs to shift that paradigm into one of trust. This could mean developing public awareness campaigns, hosting public listening sessions, or becoming a more visible presence in communities. The LGAC understands that EPA does not have the capacity to step into every problem, but as communities face big, systemic challenges like developing combined sewer systems and upgrading stormwater infrastructure in the face of a changing climate, EPA can make a difference by offering to collaborate and provide resources. The key will be to work with local, trusted leaders who can help EPA establish this trust.

Building a Network of Expertise

The LGAC understands that EPA is currently working with each state government to determine specific technical assistance needs and identify disadvantaged communities. This is an important step, as state government is crucial to connecting federal and local government. However, if EPA wants to build new, trusting partnerships with communities, then it needs to engage directly with those communities. The LGAC recommends that EPA proactively seek to meet local government leaders where they are, including but not limited to joining meetings of municipal leagues, trade associations, and other interested parties. There is no substitute for one-on-one conversations when it comes to spreading awareness of EPA programs, connecting interested parties to resources, and ultimately building trust in the federal government. While in-person meetings are always more effective, in the post-COVID age online meetings provide additional avenues for the federal government to engage.

Tapping into Existing Organizations

Aside from bringing EPA to communities, EPA can work to build a network of champions for its work. There are numerous ways to achieve this goal. The [Rural Partners Network](#), which the White House recently announced, is a step in this direction. Its whole-of-government mandate will allow communities to look at problems holistically and find solutions that pull resources from multiple federal agencies. The

model of embedding experts in local communities will provide two-way benefits. Not only will these individuals share expertise from the federal government on applications, grant management, and other technical concerns; they will also learn the needs and nuances of a local community and share that information back up to the state and federal government. However, the program will only be available to rural communities. While the LGAC understands the value of focusing on these communities, given the complexity of grant management and the SRF, we also recommend that this type of program be available for medium and large communities if replicated by EPA.

Another potential model is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [circuit rider program](#). Currently, this program contracts with the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) to provide day-to-day support in managing water systems serving communities under 10,000 residents. This model brings individuals into communities to proactively identify what work is needed, connect resources, and then complete the work. The AmeriCorps program could also be leveraged, placing motivated individuals in communities across the country to address local needs specific to water and wastewater infrastructure. Using this program would also serve to address water workforce development needs, as most AmeriCorps volunteers are just embarking on their careers. Community Action Agencies (CAA) are another model to consider. There are more than 1,000 CAAs across the country – local private and public non-profits that carry out the work of the Community Action Partnership (CAP), a federal program funded by Community Services Block Grants. CAAs work directly with low-income community members and offer a range of services designed to promote the self-sufficiency of a community. Water utilities have been especially effective in working with the program to support disadvantaged communities.

EPA could also position its Environmental Finance Centers to build a technical assistance network of local experts. For example, EPA could offer a Request for Proposal to create neighborhood water and sewer infrastructure investment centers. Cities, towns, and villages could work with these centers to assess and validate their water and sewer needs and then create an online portal of qualified contractors to present rough order of magnitude estimates for each project identified. Such a system could also benefit states, who could access these documents and work with EPA to obtain appropriate funding. In fact, some states are creating this type of system on their own.

Developing New Partnerships

Many states are already developing programs to address the needs noted above. The State of West Virginia recently enacted legislation to create a [Coal Field Community Grants Facilitation Commission](#), whose objective is to direct federal dollars to revitalized coal communities. The highlights of this program – which is detailed to the right – include providing matching funds, vocational training for displaced coal workers, and a holistic view of addressing community issues.

Universities are also working to provide real-world applications for their students by working with local communities. On the West Coast, communities in Oregon invited graduate students at the University of Oregon to complete SWOT assessment of small water systems. These assessments were then used to identify issues and develop an action plan.

Building a network of individuals and organizations who have consistent engagement, rather than just a one-off check-in with the federal or state government, will reap benefits. The LGAC encourages EPA to either institutionalize a model at the federal level that will achieve these goals, or to work with state governments as they create their own.

Reaching New People

EPA needs to understand that many communities in need of EPA’s support aren’t even aware of the programs available to them, particularly the State Revolving Fund. If they are aware, many have never applied, due to the complex administrative process involved or because of a match requirement. The LGAC recommends using established municipal leagues, city, and county associations – groups that are already closely aligned with the communities they serve – to bridge this gap. EPA’s Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations already has established relationships with many of these at the national level and could be a gateway to establishing partnerships at the state and local level. Additionally, each state has associations that work with elected officials, such as the West Virginia Public Service Commission. Again, it will be important to provide regular, face-to-face interaction with these groups by joining meetings and forging meaningful partnerships. Sharing information in a newsletter or listserv is well-intentioned, but it is not effective in reaching large numbers of new people.

A final recommendation for outreach is to connect directly with water industry employees and contractors. There are companies across the country already on the road, attending municipal meetings, working directly with water and sewerage departments, and learning about community needs. These companies could serve as a valuable conduit for information. The LGAC recommends connecting with groups like the American Water Works Associations, American Public Works Association, National Groundwater Association, National Association of County Engineers, and the Water Environmental Federation. While EPA already has partnerships with these groups at a national policy level, the LGAC recommends deepening these relationships by tapping into its membership and working collaboratively to address major issues. Aside from current members, the LGAC recommends seeking out retired members of these groups. There is a tremendous amount of knowledge drain in the water industry right now, due to recent and impending retirements. Many of these individuals were ready to end their career but still want to be engaged. The LGAC encourages EPA to look to these individuals as potential resources for providing technical assistance to water systems and training a new water workforce.

Specific Technical Needs

The specific technical assistance needs for a community will of course depend on specific communities. For this reason, the LGAC recommends that EPA build a system of assistance that covers a broad range of issues and can respond with agility. One simple step that EPA could take is to publicize points of contact for each state’s SRF programs on the EPA website, and to share this information widely. Having that individual identified would be helpful to communities trying to navigate the SRF process.

Language from West Virginia House Bill 4479, creating the Coal Field Community Grants Facilitation Commission:

To maximize the resources of the state and to create a resource for entities and persons interested in applying for grants that need assistance with grant proposal and applications, the commission shall coordinate and administer a specialized subcommittee of the commission made up of representatives of ... all institutions of higher learning in the coal field counties and regions of this state to provide assistance in the development of grants and grant applications by persons or entities that need assistance in designing, preparing, or implementing a grant proposal submission to a governmental or private entity providing grants. This assistance shall include:

- (1) Training of persons to have expertise in developing, applying for, and administering grants;*
- (2) Providing technical assistance to the commission on administration and facilitation of grant assistance applications;*
- (3) Any other actions or initiatives that assist the commission and promote the goals of this article.*

EPA seems to understand that some communities – particularly smaller communities – may need help identifying available funding streams and working through each step of an SRF application. In these instances, the best option would be to provide one-on-one support, but a series of easy to access tutorials and templates that a state can point a community to, would also be beneficial. These resources should also help local governments understand the future impacts that a new infrastructure project places on a community, including the impact on user rates and affordability. It’s also important that training opportunities are provided well in advance of any application deadline.

Other communities have the capacity to successfully apply for and receive grants but face significant challenges in meeting the day-to-day administration and reporting requirements. While this is a complex problem needing multiple approaches, the LGAC recommends that EPA partner with public utilities on workforce development recruitment and training specific to EPA programs. By building the human resources capacity to accomplish such tasks, more communities will be able to apply for and benefit from programs like the SRF.

Another issue identified by the LGAC is that in many regions neighboring communities end up competing for the same funding. The LGAC recommends that EPA Regional Offices work to connect communities and municipalities that are dealing with similar issues, so that they can work together and have a bigger impact on a regional level. This could include joint applications for funding or setting up peer-to-peer exchanges to share best practices. The LGAC also recommends that EPA support state-led or regional campaigns to build public awareness and support for common issues like lead service line replacement.

Finally, the LGAC recommends that EPA work with states to make the process of getting funding from EPA to a community more efficient. Some states thrive in this process, but others would benefit from EPA incentivizing them to improve, and even developing a related metric to encourage state-to-state competition.

Conclusion

The EPA has a historic opportunity to develop capacity in communities across the country that will ensure long-term sustainability of water infrastructure. The LGAC appreciates the opportunity to provide its input and offers its expertise as this work is implemented.

Regional Consolidation

One systemic barrier to providing technical assistance to communities is the fact that there may be dozens of unique utility services in any given region. Building capacity and awareness in every one of them is an overwhelming task.

In some parts of the country utilities have consolidated so that they can operate more efficiently. For example, in 2016 the Great Lakes Water Authority was formed to serve 112 communities and 3.8 million residents of Southeast Michigan. The results have been lowered user rates, cleaner water, and an ability to support small communities with the resources and expertise of the whole region.

EPA can play a role in incentivizing utilities to consolidate. While the main benefit would be to the communities, it would also be easier for EPA to connect with regional authorities rather than each individual community.

SCAS Recommendations: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding for Small Communities

The Small Communities Advisory Subcommittee (SCAS) of the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) is pleased to submit this report to EPA detailing recommendations on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding for smaller communities throughout the U.S.

The SCAS appreciates the opportunity to advise the agency on how smaller communities can best access and benefit from the unprecedented funding on improvements to this nation's infrastructure, especially within the context from state, local, and Tribal governments, along with U.S. territories with smaller populations.

Background

Following the 2021 passage of the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, EPA announced its intent to make significant investments in the health, equity, and resilience of American communities. With historical levels of funding to support national infrastructure, it is our understanding that EPA's goal will be to improve people's health and safety, help create good-paying jobs, and increase climate resilience throughout the country

In October 2021, EPA requested for the SCAS to provide advice and recommendations on the following charge:

As EPA implements the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), how can the Agency work to:

- Support clean and sustainable air, water, and land priorities for small and rural communities
- Support capacity needs/advancement for small and rural communities
- Ensure long-lasting communication between EPA and local officials from small and rural communities
- Ensure small communities are positioned to benefit from this generational investment in environmental infrastructure.

The Subcommittee convened a variation of public meetings and joined the LGAC's workgroups where information from EPA's program offices, such as the Office of Water and the Office of Environmental Justice, was presented to members detailing the agency's plan for BIL implementation. Based on this information from EPA leadership and technical leads, the SCAS offers a set of recommendations to best support small communities.

Overall, the mechanism to obtain BIL funding the pathway from EPA, state agencies and local governments is complex and unclear. This complexity adds an additional burden to smaller communities, especially for communities with limited resources to apply for federal funding. The SCAS recommends EPA to identify an approach that simplifies the process to acquire BIL funding from the agency to local governments so that small communities can understand how to receive as much support as possible for infrastructure upgrades.

Technical Assistance and Capacity:

Many small communities are limited in resources and experience variable capacity challenges compared to larger municipalities, thus limiting a small town's access to eligible resources. Therefore, increasing capacity in small communities will help improve local quality of life and create greater economic

opportunities. Investing in capacity advancements for smaller communities will assist the success of BIL implementation.

The SCAS recommends that EPA proactively develop funding set asides for communities with populations of 10,000 or less for capacity-building and technical assistance. Small communities should have the flexibility to determine how they define their capacity needs so that a one-size-fits-all approach is not applied to the unique composition of small communities.

Engagement and Communication:

Given the volume of BIL funding and the various program offices within EPA responsible for BIL implementation, the SCAS emphasizes the need for ongoing communication from EPA and local officials from small communities. The SCAS recommends that EPA continue to provide programmatic updates on BIL planning and implementation through unique platforms such as this subcommittee.

The SCAS also recommends that EPA:

- Collaborate with universities and community colleges that work with smaller communities.
- Increase engagement opportunities for U.S. territories and remote areas (such as Alaska communities).
- Continue to engage with Tribal governments and Tribal consortiums on funding opportunities.
- Collaborate with state municipal leads and associations to increase the broadband of information reaching smaller communities.
- Increase coordination amongst federal agencies and interagency collaborations so that small communities can more effectively identify funding eligibilities from various sources.
- Collaborate with other federal agencies to host events targeted for small communities.

Resiliency:

Upgrades to infrastructure in smaller communities is of most significance right now as the U.S. is facing a reoccurrence of extreme weather-related events. The current state of infrastructure in smaller communities will continue to be compromised until all facets of governments develop resiliency plans for BIL funded projects.

The SCAS recommends that EPA:

- Provide workforce training (in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor) for smaller communities to address the national shortages of engineers, utility workers, etc.
- Provide funding to upgrade stormwater systems that are impacted by record breaking storms.
- Incorporate continuous learning and develop best practices for smaller communities.
- Maintain affordable cost to support underserved and disadvantaged communities.
- Allow flexibility in planning so that small communities can develop recovery and resiliency contingencies.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Member Biographies

June 2022



Leirion Gaylor Baird, Chair

Mayor, Lincoln, NE

Leirion Gaylor Baird was elected Mayor of Lincoln, Nebraska in 2019, after serving two terms on the City Council. The mayor's vision of leading Lincoln toward a more successful, secure, and shared future drives her administration's agenda. That agenda prioritizes public health and safety and maintaining the capital city's low crime rate; enhancing traditional and tech infrastructure to support economic growth and community resilience; increasing access to high-quality, affordable housing; and building a vibrant quality of life for all Lincoln residents. Upon taking office, she launched the Resilient Lincoln initiative and commissioned the development of a Climate Action Plan – a first of its kind in the state of Nebraska. Mayor Gaylor Baird began her professional career as a management consultant, helping Fortune 500 companies become more efficient. She has worked as a city budget and policy analyst and as the director of an innovative after-school and summer enrichment program designed to improve educational outcomes for children from low-income families. She currently serves on the Advisory Board of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and as Chair of their Mayors and Metro Universities Task Force. Mayor Gaylor Baird has been recognized locally and nationally for her work, including the InSpire Award for Excellence in Government Service and a Rodel Fellowship in Public Leadership from the Aspen Institute.



Lisa Wong, Vice Chair

Town Manager, South Hadley, MA

Lisa Wong currently serves as the Town Manager of South Hadley, Massachusetts. Prior to this position she served four terms as Mayor of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, where she was elected as the youngest female and the first Asian American mayor in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As Mayor, Wong restored fiscal stability to Fitchburg, notably by increasing the stabilization fund, increasing the bond rating several times, reorganizing city departments, reducing health care costs, and instituting energy efficiency projects throughout the city. She attracted jobs and major investment into Fitchburg through smart growth planning projects, including reinvestment in vacant mills and the \$100 million development of an indoor water resort. Wong has a long track record of community service. She served as the Deputy Director of a non-profit providing limited English speaking and economically-disadvantaged people with education, occupational training, and social services, and is also actively engaged in training and recruiting women, youth, and people of color to become politically active. Wong was a member of the LGAC under Administrator Lisa Jackson, during which she chaired the Environmental Justice workgroup.



Ras Baraka

Mayor, Newark, NJ

Ras J. Baraka is currently serving his second term as Mayor of Newark, New Jersey. A Newark native, he has received accolades from grassroots organizations to the White House, for his ability to reduce crime to its lowest levels in five decades, address affordability while maintaining growth, lower unemployment, and nearly complete the replacement of all 23,000-plus lead service lines in the city. As part of

his commitment to strengthen Newark's position in the expanded technology space, the City is working to close the digital divide and also launched a communications network of sidewalk kiosks that provide residents and visitors with free Wi-Fi, mobile device charging, phone calls within the U.S., access to municipal services, maps and directions, and real-time local information on city streets at no cost to taxpayers or users. As the President and Chair of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association, and through his involvement in the New Jersey DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Council, he is addressing climate change and environmental justice inequities. Baraka is a lifelong educator and previously served as a member of the City of Newark Municipal Council. He is also a published author and successful poet, having appeared on several successful albums.



James Brainard, Air, Climate and Energy Workgroup Vice Chair

Mayor, Carmel, IN

Jim Brainard is the first seven-term mayor of Carmel, Indiana. Under his tenure, Carmel has experienced tremendous growth and prosperity, including a population increase from 25,000 to more than 100,000, and an increase in greenspace from 40 acres to more than 800. He was one of four republicans appointed to President Obama's State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, and often argues for more conservatives to be environmental stewards. Brainard has implemented numerous environmental initiatives for the City of Carmel. He has encouraged construction of 140 roundabouts, signed executive orders mandating the use of hybrid or flex-fuel vehicles for city operations when available, and enacted a No Idling policy for city employees. Brainard has been a guest lecturer at universities and events around the world and was named one of the "Most Powerful Hoosiers in the World" by Indianapolis Monthly.



Gary Brown, Water Workgroup Vice-Chair

Water and Sewerage Department Director, Detroit, MI

Gary Brown is the Director of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), which is the largest water and sewerage system in the United States. Service to the community has been a constant in Brown's life. He began his service in the Detroit Police Department and served 26 years as a patrol officer, precinct commander and deputy chief. Since taking the helm of DWSD in 2016, Brown has transformed its operation by focusing on compassionate customer care and addressing the evolving needs of the community. This includes developing the Water Residential Assistance Program, which has helped more than 20,000 low-income residents pay down their bills and repair plumbing leaks. Since 2016 collection rates increased from 77 percent to 93 percent and DWSD has had the lowest annual water and sewer rate increases in decades, at an average of 3 percent. Brown is also leading a comprehensive asset management program to address the City's aging infrastructure, including a goal of replacing all 80,000 private lead sewer lines in the next 20 to 30 years. Brown is also active at the regional level, serving as a board member of the Great Lakes Water Authority, which manages water and wastewater services for southeast Michigan.



Deborah Cherry
Treasurer, Genesee County, MI

Deborah Cherry has served her community with distinction for over forty years, starting as a member of a non-partisan student campaign group when she was a teenager. Since that time, she has been active in the community as a volunteer, a manager of campaigns, and as an elected County Commissioner and member of the Michigan State Senate. In 2010 she was elected treasurer for Genesee County, Michigan. With the county reeling from the housing market crash and unprecedented foreclosures, she has focused on assisting those struggling to pay their property taxes. She also provided leadership during the City of Flint's water crisis by not accepting water liens on property tax bills for lead infested water. As Chair of the Genesee County Land Bank, she is a major partner in the redevelopment of Flint and Genesee County. She is the recipient of numerous awards over her public service career, including the Distinguished Public Service Award from the faculty of the University of Michigan-Flint and the Robert Emerson Service Award for Volunteer Services from the Greater Flint Health Coalition Board.



Melissa Cribbins
Commissioner, Coos County, OR

Melissa Cribbins is serving her third term as a County Commissioner in Coos County, Oregon. Her first job was a wildland firefighter, followed by ten years in the drinking water industry, first as a Water Treatment Plant Operator for a 72 million gallon per day surface water system, and then as the Water Quality Supervisor for a 150 million gallon per day groundwater system. While working for the City of Spokane, Cribbins graduated cum laude from Gonzaga Law School. After law school, she worked as an attorney for Coquille Indian Tribe, assisting with their goal of permanent self-sufficiency. Cribbins was first appointed to the LGAC in 2020. She also serves as vice-chair of the National Association of Counties (NACo)'s Energy, Environment, and Land Use Committee and Rural Action Caucus, President of the Energy Trust of Oregon Board and as the President of the Association of Oregon Counties.



Jose Aponte Dalmau
Mayor, Carolina, Puerto Rico

Jose Aponte Dalmau has served as Mayor of Carolina, Puerto Rico, since 2007. He successfully navigated his community through the recovery of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and has developed innovative solid waste management solutions for his community. Prior to serving as Mayor, he had a successful career as an engineer. He has served on the LGAC and SCAS since 2015.



Megan Dunn
Commissioner, Snohomish County, WA

Megan Dunn is a first-term Councilmember for Snohomish County, Washington. Prior to being elected she spent 20 years working to improve community health through thoughtful policy change. Dunn led the successful campaign to establish city council districts for the city of Everett, which addressed disparities in representation and gave communities greater participation in the democratic process. Working for the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides, she led efforts to protect communities – especially school children and farmworkers – from harmful pesticides and chemicals. She also secured a city-wide

contract that included the first ever guaranteed sick days, raises for workers, and safer working conditions while working for Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Her commitment to environmentalism started with an internship studying Humpback whales off the coast of Massachusetts. Since then, she has taught sign language to gorillas, organized direct actions and protests to save rainforests, represented her neighborhood on a federal Brownfields stakeholder committee, and studied water quality issues with the Salmon Recovery Council. Snohomish County is leading efforts to address climate change with blue carbon projects, multi stakeholder projects for salmon recovery and protection, and innovative land use changes to address climate.



Mark Fox

Chairman, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation

Mark N. Fox, Chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and earned his law degree in 1993 from the University of North Dakota. First serving as a council member for 8 years he was elected Chairman in 2014, and currently serving his second term. A fierce proponent of tribal sovereignty, Chairman Fox has dedicated his administration to improving the lives of all MHA Nation members. Under his leadership, tribal members have received increased education, addiction, and health services. Chairman Fox has also expanded and enhanced tribal infrastructure and transparency in governmental affairs. He currently serves on two other federal advisory boards (Department of Energy, Department of Interior) and has previously served on advisory boards with the Internal Revenue Service and the National Indian Gaming Commission. He has also served on multiple national and tribal boards, including the Intertribal Monitoring Association on Trust Funds (ITMA) and the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA) where he served four terms as Treasurer. Chairman Fox is renowned for his work in the areas of taxation, gaming, energy, and economic development.



Brian Fulton

Administrator, Jackson County, MS

Brian Fulton has served as County Administrator of Jackson County, Mississippi, since 2012. In this position he oversees the day-to-day operations of the county and assists in preparation of the budget. Prior to the County, Fulton had a 15-year background in engineering and played a leadership role in disaster response and recovery for communities along the Mississippi Coast after Hurricane Katrina. His experiences also serve to support his work addressing a range of water quality issues, including nonpoint source pollution and harmful algae blooms.



Katherine Gilmore Richardson

Councilmember, Philadelphia, PA

Katherine Gilmore Richardson is serving her first term as Councilmember At-Large for the City of Philadelphia. Gilmore Richardson is the youngest woman ever elected Citywide and the youngest African-American woman ever elected to Philadelphia City Council. She is focused on upskilling and reskilling the local workforce, supporting local, small, and minority-owned businesses, and addressing climate change and environmental justice. Councilmember Gilmore Richardson released the first ever Philadelphia Apprenticeship Guidebook in 2020, which helps Philadelphians learn about the trades. As the Chair of

the Committee on the Environment, she launched the Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee, which works with her to co-create policy solutions to address environmental justice and climate change, and she secured new Environmental Justice funding in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. Gilmore Richardson previously served for 11 years as a staff member for Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown in roles ranging from Constituent Services to Chief of Staff. A lifelong Philadelphian, Gilmore Richardson is a graduate of Philadelphia High School for Girls and West Chester University. She is a member of Ridge Avenue Church of God of Prophecy and a proud life member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated.



Nick Gradisar

Mayor, Pueblo, CO

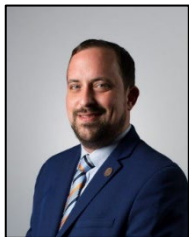
Nick Gradisar was elected as Mayor of Pueblo, Colorado, in 2019. For 65 years the town of 110,000 had no head of government, but Gradisar fought for years to change the system, accomplished it in a referendum, and then ran for the newly created position. Gradisar has been engaged in public service for many years, serving as president of the Action 22 Board of Directors, president of the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and as an elected member of the Pueblo Board of Water Works, including six years as president. Prior to his election, Gradisar spent 40 years in the private practice of law, where he was a founding partner of a law firm and served as a Pueblo County Public Trustee. As mayor he is working to address housing, transportation, economic development, education, and neighborhood revitalization within Pueblo.



Evan Hansen

House Delegate, Morgantown, WV

Evan Hansen is serving his second term in the West Virginia House of Delegates, representing Monongalia County. Hansen owns an environmental and economic development consulting firm that strengthens economies, sustains healthy environments, and builds resilient communities. Through this work he manages interdisciplinary research teams, performs quantitative and qualitative policy and scientific analyses, and provides litigation support and expert testimony. Before his election, Evan worked with legislators to respond to the Freedom Industries chemical leak, which contaminated the water supply for approximately 300,000 West Virginians, and provided testimony regarding attempts to increase the amount of cancer-causing chemicals in the state's rivers. Hansen's work has also included consulting on water and energy issues across Sub-Saharan Africa, and in China and Egypt.



Chad Harsha

Secretary of Natural Resources, Cherokee Nation

Chad Harsha was appointed Secretary of Natural Resources in 2019, after leading a legal career rooted in tribal government and natural resource issues and serving as Assistant Attorney General and General Counsel to the previous Secretary of Natural Resources. Harsha makes natural resources a fundamental priority, administering the tribe's environmental programs, and its conservation and sustainability initiatives, as well as advising the Chief and Tribal Council on related public policy matters. His legal representation for Cherokee Nation includes natural resources protection, land use practices, environmental protection, general litigation, and matters of public administration. He has successfully negotiated a Hunting and Fishing Compact between the tribe and the state that balances cultural and sustenance hunting and fishing with conservation and outdoor living. He has been instrumental in helping lead the efforts to restore the Illinois River Watershed between the State of Arkansas, State of Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation

and EPA Region 6 that put an end to years of unproductive litigation and is resulting in improved water quality.



Timothy "Zane" Hedgecock
Chief of Staff, State of North Carolina

Timothy "Zane" Hedgecock currently serves as Chief of Staff to North Carolina Agriculture Commissioner. Prior to that he served four terms as Mayor Pro Tem for Wallburg, North Carolina. As a 12th generation farmer and the owner of a tobacco farm in Wallburg, he understands the restrictions and requirements facing farmers today. Agriculture and agribusiness are North Carolina's number one industry and make up 17 percent of the state workforce. Aside from his role as an elected official, he has also served the farmers and citizens of the state of North Carolina for 17 years. His current position is Chief of Staff for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. In this position, Hedgecock serves as a conduit of information and support to members of Congress, North Carolina General Assembly, agricultural commodity groups, and other agricultural leaders across the country.



Deana Holiday Ingraham
Mayor, East Point, GA

During her first term as mayor of East Point, Georgia, Deana Holiday Ingraham has championed implementation of livable wages for City employees, financial literacy for youth, developing public arts and agricultural master plans, and using Brownfields grant funding to develop unused land. As Mayor, she championed East Point being designated as a "Welcoming City," an AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and led the creation of "The Healthy Point Initiative" to increase healthy lifestyle choices of East Point residents, create a more active and connected community and provide greater access to health information and services. Prior to her role as mayor, she had a successful legal career, including serving as a trial court law clerk, managing member of her own law firm, and an advocate for senior citizens. As a child advocate, she also co-founded the One Voice Children's Law Center, a non-profit law firm that provided pro bono legal services to youth who had cases pending in the dependency, delinquency, or education systems. Holiday Ingraham serves on several organizations, including as a board member for the National League of Cities (NLC) and Georgia Municipal Association. In 2018 and 2019, Mayor Holiday Ingraham was named as one of "Atlanta's Top 100 Black Women of Influence."



Ella Jones
Mayor, Ferguson, MO

Ella Jones was elected as its first African-American and female mayor in 2020. A resident of Ferguson for more than 40 years, Jones had served on the Ferguson City Council for one term, also holding the distinction of being the first African-American elected to the position. During her tenure she has championed public safety, neighborhood stabilization (including funding for first-time homeownership), and engaging Ferguson's youth with more job opportunities. After Michael Brown's death, Ferguson was under a federal consent decree from the Justice Department mandating reform of its police department and courts. Under Jones' leadership, the reform has centered on transparency, youth engagement, and new personnel. Prior to public service, Jones was a trained chemist, working for the Washington University School of Medicine and KV Pharmaceutical before becoming a Sales Director with Mary Kay

for 30 years. She is certified by the American Chemical Society as a high-pressure liquid chromatographer and served 22 years as a Pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.



Kelly King

Councilmember, Maui County, HI

Kelly Takaya King is serving her third term on the Maui County Council. King has long been a community organizer and environmentalist and has served as a board member for many energy and sustainability efforts, leading to partnerships at the local, federal, and international level. As a Councilmember, King fought for settlement of a landmark lawsuit brought by the Hawai i Wildlife Fund and other environmental groups against Maui County, pushing for clean water solutions and to end the taxpayer-funded legal battle. She currently leads the Council's Climate Action, Resilience, and Environment Committee and is Vice President of the Hawai i State Association of Counties Executive Committee. Last year King was recruited to join the board of ICLEI-USA - Local Governments for Sustainability. In the private sector, King is Vice President of Pacific Biodiesel Technologies, LLC, the nation's longest operating biodiesel producer. She co-founded the company with her husband in 1995 to alleviate the disposal of waste cooking oil at Maui's landfill. The company has built 13 plants in the U.S. and Japan and its community-based biodiesel model has become a standard for the sustainable renewable fuel industry. In 2006, King co-founded the Sustainable Biodiesel Alliance, a national non-profit organization that developed a certification process for sustainable biodiesel practices.



Christine Lowery

Commissioner, Cibola County, NM

Christine Lowery, a first term Commissioner in Cibola County, New Mexico, views her role on the LGAC/SCAS as spiritual, personal, and purposeful for the people she serves. She is a member of the Pueblo of Laguna and post-retirement, has lived on her ancestral land at the Pueblo of Laguna for over 20 years. Her village of Paguete is also home to the Jackpile-Paguete Uranium Mine, once the world's largest open-pit mine, and now, a Superfund site. Having watched relatives and family suffer multiple health complications, she has a deep passion for environmental justice. She is a member of the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE), which has successfully hired expertise in mining, hydrology, and mine closures, to build knowledge for all involved and ask penetrating questions that hold parties responsible. Lowery had a successful career as a social worker and finally, an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Helen Bader School of Social Work. Since retiring in 2010, she has served as president of the New Mexico Indian Council on Aging, as a year-long substitute on the Laguna Pueblo Council, on the Laguna School Board, and as an ombudsman for elders at the Rainbow nursing home.



Rachel May

State Senator, Syracuse, NY

Fresh off a career in sustainability education at Syracuse University, Senator May brought a whole systems approach to New York state government when she was elected in 2018. She helped negotiate the nation's strongest climate law in 2019, making sure that upstate forests and farms were considered in crafting solutions. In her approach to the state budget, she has sought holistic decision-making, promoting measures like soil health policies to prevent flooding downstream, or home care investments to help seniors and the state avoid the high costs of nursing home care. A resident of Syracuse, Senator May has

been a consistent advocate for rebuilding the economies of upstate cities through investments in public transportation, complete streets, lead abatement and other environmental justice measures, housing security, and equal access to excellent public schools. She also represents a rural county and has worked on issues like rural broadband, opioid addiction treatment and prevention, and protecting the state's extraordinary freshwater resources. Senator May's overall goal and focus is giving voice to underrepresented and vulnerable populations and ensuring state government is more efficient, equitable, and accessible for all New Yorkers. Now in her second term, she is Chair of the Committee on Aging and the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources.



Melissa McKinlay

Commissioner, Palm Beach County, FL

Palm Beach County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay was first elected to the Board of County Commissioners in 2014 and re-elected unopposed in 2018. She served as County Mayor from 2017-2018 and is Immediate Past President of the Florida Association of Counties, Vice Chair of the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Agriculture & Rural Affairs Policy Steering Committee, and a Member of the NACo Board of Directors. Prior to her election, she spent nearly twenty years advocating on behalf of women, children, and families with the Palm Beach County Legislative Affairs Office, members of Congress, and as a volunteer with several organizations including the Junior League. Her public service involves working at all levels of government, including (former) U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, the U.S. and Florida House of Representatives, the State of Florida, and both Palm Beach and Sarasota (FL) counties. Commissioner McKinlay's district is the largest agricultural production area east of the Mississippi River and the 5th largest in the nation and includes Lake Okeechobee. Promoting environmental justice, giving voice to the underserved, and protecting rural communities, farmers, and farmworkers are top priorities. Additional priorities include infrastructure and economic development, affordable and farmworker housing, and combatting the nation's opioid/heroin overdose epidemic, human trafficking, and the COVID-19 pandemic.



Julian McTizic

Mayor, Bolivar, TN

In 2017 Julian McTizic was elected as the youngest and first African-American mayor of his hometown of Bolivar, Tennessee. Prior to becoming mayor, he served as a city councilman for four years. In 2021, he was re-elected by the largest margin in the recorded history of Bolivar. He is a Paul Harris Fellow in the Bolivar Chapter of Rotary International, a member of the Bolivar General Hospital Healthcare Foundation, the NAACP, and the Joint Economic and Community Development Board. He also serves as the State Director for Tennessee's chapter of Young Elected Officials. Since being elected as mayor, he has stayed true to his campaign promise for transparency in government and putting citizens first. Every council meeting in the City of Bolivar is now streamed live via social media. McTizic's Spotlight on Business, Meet Your Neighbor, and community policing advancements have been a few of his successes during his tenure.



Alex Morse

Town Manager, Provincetown, MA

Alex Morse was first elected mayor of his hometown of Holyoke, Massachusetts as a senior at Brown University in 2012. He served four terms as the city's first openly gay mayor, leading initiatives like offering refuge to thousands of Puerto Ricans displaced by Hurricane Maria, closing Massachusetts' last remaining coal plant and replacing it with the state's largest solar farm and battery storage facility, encouraging legal marijuana businesses, and restoring the city's downtown. He is also responsible for significantly increasing representation of people of color on local boards, and high school graduation rates. These accomplishments led to him being named one of *Forbes Magazine's* 30 Under 30 in Law & Policy in 2019. Morse is also a professor of urban governance at UMass-Amherst. In April 2021, he accepted a position as Town Manager of Provincetown, Massachusetts, where he is working with the community to address climate resilience and maintain water quality standards.



Douglas J. Nicholls

Mayor, Yuma, AZ

Douglas Nicholls is currently serving his second term as Mayor of Yuma, Arizona. Raised in Yuma, Nicholls believes that quality communities provide opportunities for success to all residents through jobs, superior education, and a robust quality of life. His vision to make higher education more accessible culminates in plans for the Yuma Multiversity Campus (YMC), a brownfields redevelopment project that will offer baccalaureate programs in full, utilizing the academic programs and specialties offered by the state universities and local community colleges. Nicholls has also spearheaded efforts to enhance and grow the Yuma community, including founding [4FrontED](#), an economic development-focused governing board of mayors from binational locations near the U.S.-Mexico border. The group has organized many successful awareness-building events, including a Mayors' Binational Bike Ride that focused on health of the individual and the health of the environment, and a boat trip on the Colorado River, where environmental experts joined Arizona mayors to discuss river management, water quality and the delicate nature of the river system. Nicholls is a successful engineer focused on stormwater and transportation engineering. Through this work, including founding his own firm, he has first-hand knowledge of the many environmental services available.



Ron Nirenberg

Mayor, San Antonio, TX

Ron Nirenberg is currently serving his third term as the mayor of San Antonio, which has the 7th largest population in the United States and is one of the nation's fastest growing cities. Nirenberg is the first San Antonio Mayor of Asian Pacific Islander descent. His mother is Filipino and his paternal grandparents were immigrants from Eastern Europe who passed through Ellis Island. Through his personal experiences, Nirenberg developed a core commitment to civic participation and the universal values of liberty, justice, and equal opportunity for every person. Under his leadership as mayor, the city has adopted an equity framework in budgeting to reduce poverty, improve public health, and overcome historical socioeconomic inequality. He is focused on making key investments necessary to accommodate San Antonio's growth, which is expected to nearly double the city's population by 2040. This forward-looking approach drives the mayor's vision of a compassionate community with a globally competitive economy. Nirenberg is also an environmental advocate, having spearheaded a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, and joining the Climate Mayors Steering Committee, a group of 24 mayors

who will serve as a leading voice in efforts to further climate action in the U.S. Prior to becoming Mayor, he served two terms on the San Antonio City Council, founded two small-businesses, worked as the general manager of KRTU-FM San Antonio, and served as a program director for the Annenberg Public Policy Center, where he developed and directed award-winning civic engagement programs.



Neil O'Leary

Mayor, Waterbury, CT

Mayor Neil M. O'Leary has dedicated over 40 years to his career, to serve the people of Waterbury, Connecticut. He joined the Waterbury Police Department in 1980 and rose through the ranks, becoming Chief of Police in 2004. In this role, his innovative and aggressive approach to law enforcement has been credited with steadily decreasing the city's crime rate. In 2011, he was elected as Mayor. Under O'Leary's guidance, he revitalized the city's former brass manufacturing industry in a way that not only kept the metal industry, but also used Brownfield programs and other funding sources to remediate contaminated properties and create new opportunities. There are 50 active Brownfield sites in the City of Waterbury. Responding to neighborhood concerns with blighted housing and vacant lots, O'Leary coalesced neighborhood groups and community leaders to launch a comprehensive initiative that has resulted in an aggressive approach to blight and litter enforcement, increased demolition of substandard housing, developed new data collection standards and strengthened community partnerships. He believes that a team-centric approach predicated on input from the community is critically important to successful government and has used this approach to lead multiple regional government coalitions.



Satya Rhodes-Conway, Air, Climate and Energy Workgroup Chair

Mayor, Madison, WI

Elected in 2019, Satya Rhodes-Conway is the second female and first out LGBTQ person to serve as mayor of Madison, Wisconsin. She has extensive experience in local policy and practice, having served three terms on the Madison Common Council, and worked with mayors and organizations across the country to implement innovative policy that promote environmental economic sustainability and build democratically accountable communities. As co-chair of the Climate Mayors, Rhodes-Conway recognizes the need for whole-of-government approach to climate change, including public budgets, capital investments, and a focus on equity. Madison is the first city in Wisconsin to set a goal of 100 percent renewable energy and zero net carbon emissions for municipal operations. Before holding elected office, Rhodes-Conway was the Managing Director of the Mayors Innovation Project and a senior associate at the Center on Wisconsin Strategy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She also analyzed state endangered species programs for Defenders of Wildlife, researched and wrote about progressive environmental policy at the State Environmental Resource Center, and taught undergraduate biology and ecology.



Deborah Robertson

Mayor, Rialto, CA

Deborah Robertson was elected Mayor of Rialto, California, in 2012, and is currently serving her third term. Her experience in government is extensive and includes more than 20 years on the Council and leadership positions at the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and San Bernardino County Transportation Agency, in various capacities as a member. Robertson retired as the Deputy District Director, External Affairs for California Department of Transportation, Los Angeles and Ventura counties,

after a career of more than 25 years state service. Rialto was home to a military munitions site in the 1940s. Chemicals used for manufacturing created ground contamination, which impacted water wells, eventually leading to a declaration of a Superfund site. Rialto is home to several corporate distribution facilities today, and Robertson, along with Council, have developed several public-private partnerships promoting industrial environmental sustainability. In 2014, Rialto received the first e3p3 grant, along with state and federal recognition for programs and services that simultaneously address environmental sustainability, economic development, and equity. Mayor Robertson has spoken before congressional and regional committees, addressing environmental remediation. She has received recognition from numerous organizations, as a visionary among city leaders.



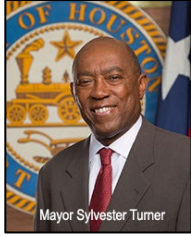
Michael Scuse, Water Workgroup Chair
Secretary of Agriculture, State of Delaware

In 2017, Michael T. Scuse was reappointed as Delaware's Secretary of Agriculture, having previously held the position from 2001 to 2008. Scuse previously served with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as Acting U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Acting Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, and Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. As Under Secretary, he oversaw USDA's Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency, and Foreign Agricultural Services. He led initiatives to improve the competitiveness of American products in the global marketplace, created new markets to increase rural economic opportunity, and delivered assistance that helped to keep America's farmers and ranchers in business. He has received numerous awards during his career, including the Medal of Achievement from the Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc and the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service to Delaware Agriculture, and also served as the Vice President of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA). He has experience working on a range of water issues and is a lifelong farmer of corn, soybean, and wheat.



Valinda Shirley (LGAC)
Navajo EPA Executive Director, Navajo Nation

Valinda Shirley serves as the Executive Director of Navajo Nation's Environmental Protection Agency. Navajo Nation is the largest tribe in the United States and has the most delegated EPA programs. Before her appointment, she served as the Senior Remedial Project Manager for the Navajo Nation EPA Superfund Program, coordinating on-site environmental cleanup or remediation projects to ensure compliance with Navajo Nation and federal environmental laws, standards, and regulations, and requirements, including Din Fundamental Law. Previously she served as the Senior Remedial Project manager for the Navajo Nation EPA Superfund Program and School Board Vice President for Rock Point Community School. She has worked closely on a range of environmental issues, including the Abandoned Uranium Mines project, coordinating with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and managing water cleanup standards. She is committed to finding a way for the Navajo Nation to address the illegal dumping of refuse.



Sylvester Turner

Mayor, Houston, TX

Sylvester Turner is serving his second term as Mayor of Houston, Texas. Since taking office, Turner has led the nation's fourth-largest city through a range of challenges, including budget deficits, homelessness, the COVID-19 global pandemic, and natural disasters. Mayor Turner's signature priorities include Complete Communities, an initiative designed to revitalize and improve Houston's most under-served neighborhoods by partnering with local stakeholders to leverage resources to create a more equitable and prosperous city for all Houstonians. Serving on the front lines of climate and extreme weather disasters, Turner has also championed many environmental initiatives, including launching Resilient Houston, the City's resilience strategy, and Houston's first Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, meeting the Paris Agreement goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, protecting residents from unhealthy air emissions and particulate matter from a planned concrete batch plant, building a large solar farm on a former landfill site, and fostering the development of Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) and clean hydrogen. Prior to being elected mayor, Turner served in the Texas House of Representatives for 27 years, including as Speaker Pro Tem for three terms. At the national level, Mayor Turner is a trustee of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and serves on the Audit and Finance Committee, Chair of Climate Mayors, Board Chair of the Resilient Cities Network, member of the C40 and Global Covenant for Mayors for Climate and Energy, and Vice President of the African American Mayors Association.



Lucy Vinis

Mayor, Eugene, OR

Lucy Vinis has served as Mayor of Eugene, Oregon for 5 years. She has worked across the government and non-profit sectors to address equity, land use, natural resources, agriculture, housing, and homelessness. Early in her career she worked for the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) organization that supported Palestinian schools, health institutions, and agricultural cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza. Later, she worked as a consultant in Washington, DC, and co-authored studies on sustainable farming, land use, and development impacts on ground and surface water in the Chesapeake Bay. When she moved to Eugene, she joined the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP), where she authored a report that galvanized the Oregon Legislature's successful adoption of the state's Pesticide Use Tracking law. Her focus as mayor continues to advance those priorities: addressing the dual challenges of climate change and population growth, increasing the supply of housing that people can afford, supporting efforts to stabilize people who are homeless, and encouraging economic development. Vinis is a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and a Climate Mayor, bringing Eugene's leadership and experience into the national discussion about the role of cities in responding to climate change.



Jeff Witte

Secretary of Agriculture

Jeff Witte was named New Mexico's fifth permanent Secretary of Agriculture in May 2011, after serving in various capacities in the New Mexico Department of Agriculture since 1994. He has been a member of both the LGAC and SCAS since 2015, including serving as Vice Chair from 2018 to 2020. The bulk of Jeff's time as New Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture is spent on the road, meeting with groups that represent farmers and ranchers across the state. He also works to educate legislators about New Mexico agriculture. During his tenure he has also created the New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program, represented New Mexico ranchers and farmers on state legislation, and started the Southwest Border Food Safety and Defense Center at New Mexico State University, which brings together law enforcement and the agricultural industry to develop plans that will protect New Mexico agriculture as part of a homeland security strategy. Witte is past president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), past president of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture, past president of the Western United States Agriculture Trade Association, and past chair of Natural Resources, Pesticide Management & Environment Committee for NASDA. In 2020, Jeff was appointed to the EPA's Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee and the USDA's Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics.

SMALL COMMUNITIES ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

Member Biographies

June 2022



Christine Lowery

Commissioner, Cibola County, NM

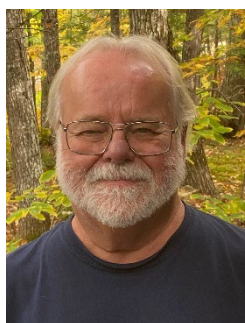
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Rodney Bartlett

Capital Projects Manager, Town of Peterborough, NH

Rodney Bartlett has held important roles in the public service industry for 42 years. He is currently the Capital Projects Manager of the Town of Peterborough, NH; Prior to this position, he was the Town Administrator from 2015 to 2020, and the was the Director of Public Works for the Town of Peterborough from 2006 to 2015. From 1998-2006, was the Director of Public Works for the Town of Salem, NH. He has held several key positions in the Town of Derry, NH, from 1979-1990, including Community and Economic Development Director, Town Administrator, and Director of Public Works. He has been re-appointed to the LGAC/SCAS committees of the EPA. In 2017, Rodney was one of four nominees for the Man of the Year award for the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce.



Tom Carroll
City Manager, Cambridge, MD

Tom Carroll currently serves as the City Manager of Cambridge, Maryland, a role he has held since April of 2022. As City Manager, Carroll manages the day-to-day operations of the municipal organization, supervises all City employees, negotiates and oversees municipal contracts, prepares the annual budget and capital program, enforces laws and ordinances, and implements the Council's policy direction. Prior to serving in Cambridge, Carroll was the village manager of

Silverton, Ohio and the city manager of Loveland, Ohio. He was also a Research Fellow with ICMA from 2018-2019.



Jose Aponte Dalmau
Mayor, Carolina, Puerto Rico

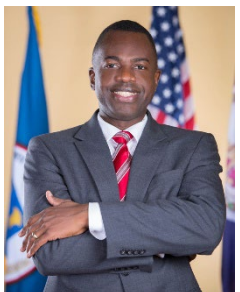
Jose Aponte Dalmau has served as Mayor of Carolina, Puerto Rico, since 2007. He successfully navigated his community through the recovery of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and has developed innovative solid waste management solutions for his community. Prior to serving as Mayor, he had a successful career as an engineer. He has served on the LGAC and SCAS since 2015.



Vincent DeSantis
Mayor, Gloversville, NY

Vincent DeSantis has over 20 years of public service accomplished throughout his career. He served as a city court judge for 20 years until he retired in 2011, where he went on to serve on the steering committee updating the city's comprehensive plan in 2014. He was first elected to city government as the third ward councilman in 2015, later being elected councilman-at-large in 2017. DeSantis was appointed

Mayor of Gloversville by the Common Council in January 2019 after the former mayor, Dayton King, resigned. DeSantis was officially elected mayor later in the year in order to fill the remaining two-year unexpired term. DeSantis has been tirelessly working on combatting blight in Gloversville, and over the past year, DeSantis has been working on developing a new initiative to further combat blight in the city. He has been successful in securing grants in order to combat blight in Gloversville.



Kwasi Fraser
Mayor, Purcellville, VA

Kwasi Fraser began his term as Mayor of Purcellville July 2014. He moved to Purcellville in 2006, where he has remained actively engaged in community service including youth sports and school activities. Fraser brings experience from his distinguished corporate career, including contributions at AT&T, Sprint Nextel, Marriott International, and Verizon. He brings a strong work ethic and corporate experience, as well as multiple higher education degrees including an MBA in

Finance from Rutgers University, an Executive Education certificate from Harvard Business School, a Bachelor of Engineering degree from Stony Brook University, and a Project Management Professional (PMP) certificate from Project Management Institute. In his current position as Mayor, and as a Lean Six

Sigma Black Belt, Fraser provides leadership in operational efficiency, revenue growth, and sustainability. As Mayor, Fraser works with his fellow town council members actively working to place the needs of Purcellville citizens first to preserve quality of life and create lasting value of the town.



Brian Fulton

Administrator, Jackson County, MS

Brian Fulton has served as County Administrator of Jackson County, Mississippi, since 2019. In this position he oversees the day-to-day operations of the county's 16 departments and is responsible for the budget. Fulton has overseen the small, coastal county as it continues its recovery from Hurricane Katrina. His 10 years of experience as an engineer also serve to support his work addressing a range of water quality issues, including nonpoint source pollution and harmful algal blooms.



Dave Glatt

Director of Department of Environmental Quality, North Dakota

Dave Glatt is the current Director of the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), where he was appointed by Governor Doug Burgum in May 2019. Glatt brings more than 35 years of experience in environmental protection to his role as Director of the DEQ. At the time of his appointment, Glatt was Chief of the Environmental Health Section of the North Dakota Department of Health, which he has held since 2002. During his tenure with the Environmental Health Section, Glatt served as director of the Division of Waste Management, interim director of the Consolidated Laboratories, assistant director of the Division of Water Quality, and manager of the Groundwater Protection Program. Glatt has worked in the Drinking Water Program where he helped implement the Safe Drinking Water Act and was the state project manager for an EPA Superfund project to address high arsenic levels in groundwater in southeastern North Dakota.



Daniel Guzman

Councilman, Oneida Nation, WI

Councilman Guzman has been tasked to act in a liaison capacity with the Oneida Nation's Land, Environmental Health & Safety division and EPA's Region 5 Regional Tribal Operations Committee. Councilman Guzman actively participates and collaborates on many complex policy issues with federal officials and agencies and works collaboratively with tribal nations throughout Indian Country and builds and maintains positive working relationships with federal partners. Councilman Guzman is also a staunch advocate in protecting the environment, looking long-term at the impacts of today on our future generations.



Ella Jones

Mayor, Ferguson, MO

Ella Jones was elected as its first African-American and female mayor in 2020. A resident of Ferguson for more than 40 years, Jones had served on the Ferguson City Council for one term, also holding the distinction of being the first African-American elected to the position. During her tenure she has championed public safety, neighborhood stabilization (including funding for first-time homeownership),

and engaging Ferguson's youth with more job opportunities. After Michael Brown's death, Ferguson was under a federal consent decree from the Justice Department mandating reform of its police department and courts. Under Jones' leadership, the reform has centered on transparency, youth engagement, and new personnel. Prior to public service, Jones was a trained chemist, working for the Washington University School of Medicine and KV Pharmaceutical before becoming a Sales Director with Mary Kay for 30 years. She is certified by the American Chemical Society as a high-pressure liquid chromatographer and served 22 years as a Pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.



Ann Mallek
County Supervisor, Albemarle County

Ann Mallek was first elected to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors, White Hall District, in November 2008. In her 14th year on the Board of Supervisors, she has over 40 years of experience in public service, serving on multiple committees in various positions- Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau

Executive Committee (member), Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Committee (Board Liaison), Crozet Community Advisory Committee (Board Liaison), Historic Preservation Committee (Board Liaison), Piedmont Workforce Council (designee in absence of Chair), Metropolitan Planning Organization (rotating chair/member), Rivanna River Basin Commission (Chair), and Workforce Investment Board (Board Liaison). She is an appointee to the Small Communities Advisory Committee (SCAS) of the EPA. She is an active member of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) Board of Directors, VACO Agricultural and Environment Committee, VACO Energy Committee, VACO High Growth Coalition, NACO Environment and Land Use Committee, NACO Veterans Services Committee, NACO DCR Advisory Committee, NACO South Region, NACO Arts and Culture Commission, and the Virginia State Board for Workforce Development. In 13 of her 14 years on the Board of Supervisors, she has held 6 town halls annually to meet with constituents, going online with Covid.



Hattie Portis-Jones
Councilwoman, Fairburn, GA

Hattie Portis-Jones is serving her second term as a council member in Fairburn and is also Mayor Pro Tem. Major accomplishments from her tenure include developing an 88-unit active Senior Living Facility, a football and water Park, downtown amphitheater, and a farmer's market that accepts SNAP benefits. She successfully championed a collaborative traffic relief project, major economic development projects that created hundreds of jobs and created a new funding stream for hazardous waste site and illegal tire dump cleanups. She was recently on the National League of Cities' (NLC) Board of Directors Legislative Action Committee and was Chair of NLC's Energy Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee. She currently works with NLC's Leadership Fellows and is engaged in several regional governmental groups. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including recognition as one of the National Urban Fellows 50 Icons (2019); Woman of Courage in Government (2018); and Who's Who in Black Atlanta (2017).



Christina Sablan

Representative, Northern Mariana Islands

Christina Sablan brings multiple years of experience in public service. She was first elected into the Northern Mariana Islands House of Representatives in 2007, where she represented District 1. She went on to be elected to the Northern Mariana Islands House of Representatives in both 2018 and 2020, where she represents District 2. She has experience working in the Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as a Waste Reduction and Recycling Coordinator. She is heavily involved with her community, both as a Public Forum coordinator as well as environmental volunteerism and education. She is the current Chair of the Health and Welfare Committee.



Jeremy Stutsman

Mayor, Goshen, IN

Jeremy Stutsman has served the community of Goshen for over two decades. Stutsman took office as Mayor of the City of Goshen in January 2016, becoming the 30th and youngest elected Mayor. His prior public service included serving on the City Council and Redevelopment Commission for eight years. For just over 20 years, Stutsman has been active in numerous local boards and not-for-profit organizations. He is a seventh-generation Goshen resident, who graduated from Goshen Community Schools and Butler University. As Mayor of Goshen, Stutsman is responsible for a growing city. Goshen is a strong community with thriving entrepreneurs, arts and manufacturing sector. Mayor Stutsman puts strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion, environmental and youth initiatives, and responsible government.



Jeff Witte

Secretary of Agriculture

Jeff Witte was named New Mexico's fifth permanent Secretary of Agriculture in May 2011, after serving in various capacities in the New Mexico Department of Agriculture since 1994. He has been a member of both the LGAC and SCAS since 2015, including serving as Vice Chair from 2018 to 2020. The bulk of Jeff's time as New Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture is spent on the road, meeting with groups that represent farmers and ranchers across the state. He also works to educate legislators about New Mexico agriculture. During his tenure he has also created the New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program, represented New Mexico ranchers and farmers on state legislation, and started the Southwest Border Food Safety and Defense Center at New Mexico State University, which brings together law enforcement and the agricultural industry to develop plans that will protect New Mexico agriculture as part of a homeland security strategy. Witte is past president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), past president of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture, past president of the Western United States Agriculture Trade Association, and past chair of Natural Resources, Pesticide Management & Environment Committee for NASDA. In 2020, Jeff was appointed to the EPA's Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee and the USDA's Advisory Committee on Agriculture Statistics.