



Isothermal Planning and Development Commission

2018 Regional Legislative Issues

To the Members and staff of our Regional Federal and State Delegation,

Welcome to our Inaugural Legislative Gathering here in the Isothermal Region of North Carolina! Your attendance here today means so much to the 28 county and municipal governments that make up the Isothermal Region which include the member governments of Polk, Cleveland, Rutherford and McDowell Counties. The Board of Directors and members of the Isothermal Regional Commission wish to thank each of you for your continued support and interest in the Isothermal Region of North Carolina. This Regional Commission has benefited from the regional organization, interaction and your support as our State and Federal Representatives.

We have worked together to access over \$4.4 million in Appalachian Regional Commission funds since 2010 to leverage \$9 million in other dollars for projects around Polk, McDowell, and Rutherford Counties; to help our local employers through the Region C Workforce Development Board, which averages \$1.3 million per year in our four county region to benefit employees in On-the-Job Training, Dislocated Worker Programs and Youth Programs; USDA has made a total of \$216 million in investment in our four county region in the areas of Housing Guarantees, Housing Projects, Community Facilities, Water and Environmental Projects such as public utilities, and Business Development; over \$6 million in EDA Funding has been received in Region C to leverage over \$18 million in investments such as the Earl Scruggs Center in Shelby and Workforce Development Centers at Cleveland and Isothermal Community College(s), and infrastructure investment in Marion and McDowell County.

The Board of the Isothermal Regional Commission would like to thank you for your continued support of these issues and as always, we thank you for your support of your Regional Commission. This past September, the Commission presented the Regional Economic Development Plan for the Isothermal Region and its member governments. Since that time, we have engaged our membership and other partners in our Region to achieve the recommended actions found within this plan.

At our January Meeting, we adopted a list of Legislative Issues from this plan and other issues of regional significance to our Region and are presenting these issues to each of you. We stand prepared as a Region to assist you at the State and Federal Level to better understand these issues and to help find creative and positive solutions that would benefit the citizens of the Isothermal Region. Please take the time to look over our list of Legislative Issues on the back of this page.

Economic and Workforce Development

- Ensure financial support for broadband, water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects within the region.
- Support continued funding of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development.
- Ensure continued investment in workforce development through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding for adult and youth training programs that are responsive to the current and future needs of local businesses, and that supports the development of the Region's labor force through Career & Technical Education, Soft Skills, and vocational training, as well as support the achievement of Certified Work Ready Community status for the region's counties.
- Support expansion of accessible, affordable high-speed fiber and mobile broadband throughout the region.
- Support legislation that will provide sufficient funding at the state level for incentive programs such as a competitive film incentive program, robust state historic preservation tax credits, and the Main Street Solutions fund necessary to grow jobs and the economy.
- Support legislation to revise the tier method of measuring levels of economic distress to focus on the causes of distress and taking sub-county, regional data into account.

Human Services

- Increase funding for Senior Centers by an additional \$300,000 in recurring funds.
- Strengthen and Fund North Carolina's Adult Protective Services Program (APS) in order to respond to the accelerated growth in the State's aging population, some of whom may be at risk of becoming victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Establish a joint legislative committee to examine issues pertaining to the state's growing older adult population and to make recommendations on how the state can better support ways for North Carolinian's to age with dignity.

Transportation

- Continue to seek future interstate status for US 74 from I-26 in Polk County through Cleveland County to I-85.
- Seek methods to increase the current level of NCDOT Division 13 and 14 maintenance funds, including pavement rehabilitation.
- Advocate for Complete Streets whenever roads are modernized or widened.
- Work with state-wide partners to modify the 2013 STI law to restore state funding for bicycle/pedestrian projects and eliminate the 20% local match requirement.
- Work with NCDOT, law enforcement and other partners to achieve NC Vision Zero, a state-wide program which aims to eliminate roadway deaths and injuries using data-driven prevention strategies.

Housing

- Support an increase in the level of funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant, the HUD-VASH Program, and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- Assist local governments in finding sustainable and affordable options for housing rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods and in providing multi-modal transportation options to connect affordable housing developments to employment and cultural centers
- Continue and support marketing and education efforts seeking to inform protected class members about their rights and fair housing in general – working to reduce language barriers and to provide translation services.