

National Alliance of Counties (NACo) March 8-26, 2021 Virtual Legislative Conference

Mar 8: 7:45-1:3 p.m. Today I learned that NACo is taking credit for \$65.1 billion in direct covid relief aid going to counties, boroughs and parishes. Earlier aid was passed through the states, this will be direct. The money is allocated by population. By comparing the national population to the Kenai Peninsula Borough population, I estimated the KPB share will be about \$11 million. City Municipalities will get money of their own, part of a separate \$65.1 billion. There is money for education as well, that will go to school districts. It is also separate and not part of the \$65.1 billion. There will be \$1.5 billion for public lands counties and that is to be on top of their normal PILTS funds.

Subsequently I learned:

There are 3,069 counties in the United States. 2,392 are members of NACo. The Kenai Peninsula Borough is one of the 2,392. So is Fairbanks North Star Borough, Mat-Su Borough, Kodiak Borough and the City of Anchorage. It looks to me like Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Tennessee and Texas have numerous counties who are not members.

NACo was founded in 1935. They have assets worth \$90 million.

Matt Chase is the executive director.

Gary Moore of Boone County, Kentucky is president.

I noticed, NACo is meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, May 18-20, 2022.

I listened to President Biden address NACo. He is a former County Councilman. He was elected to the New Castle County Council in 1970. Wilmington, Delaware is in New Castle County. Wilmington is southwest of Philadelphia.

Biden was well received with council members from his old county claiming him as “theirs.”

Biden took questions and after a Councilman from somewhere asked a question, Biden said, “_____ [I don’t remember the county] County! The best thing that ever came out of _____ County was _____, [I don’t remember the name] who married my kid sister.”

I listened to a number of Congress members and key government people, including Pete Buttigieg, Secretary of Transportation.

I’ve never observed someone being a NACo representative before and I didn’t find a job description, so I’m not sure exactly what my job is. Therefore, I kept my eyes and ears open and my mouth shut. The latter was easy to do. Oodles of meetings went on, but only 3 or 4 offered me a Zoom link. So, I could only participate in the Zoom meetings. I did vote on policies when allowed. I noticed that I happened to vote in the majority every time. For instance, in one vote the motion passed with of 82 of the 91 members present voting. This measure, whatever it was, passed with 74% support.

I noticed the Republican-Democrat divide was surprisingly missing from these meetings. I saw it in a couple votes, but for the most part NACo members seem to be very focused on making policies or getting federal money to benefit their counties.

NACo adopted lots of policies. Thankfully, I wasn't invited to the Zoom meetings for most of them. An example of a policy they adopted is:

3. **Interim Resolution on FY 2022 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban**
4. **Development.** 5 ____
6. **Issue:** Support Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
7. **Development (HUD).** 8 ____
9. **Adopted Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to support the following
10. levels of funding for core U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs in the
11. Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
12. Appropriations bill: no less than \$4.2 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula
13. funding; no less than \$1.7 billion in formula funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program
14. (HOME); \$3 billion for Homeless Housing Assistance grants, including at least \$290 million for the
15. Emergency Solutions Grant program plus an amount to fully fund expiring supportive housing and Shelter
16. Plus Care rent subsidy contracts; expansion of the Section 8 voucher program in addition to full funding
17. for existing Section 8 project-based and tenant-based contracts; \$40 million for HUD-Veterans Affairs
18. Supportive Housing (VASH) and \$500 million in Section 108 Loan Guarantee authority.

NACo adopted too many policies to include in a report.

NACo sends emails pretty much every day.

I was and am overwhelmed. Several days I wasn't invited to attend via Zoom so I watched a few minutes and went back to personal work. I think in March alone there were eleven days of meetings.

Respectfully,

Brent Johnson
Alaska Municipal League co-representative to NACo