

Energy Communities Alliance (ECA). Ryti Treasurer, Executive Board, Board. There were monthly Executive Board remote meetings in February and April. We also had an in-person meeting at the Waste Management Symposium in Phoenix. One of the highlights of Waste Management meeting was the remarks by Tim Walsh, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Management (EM) and answers to Board member questions. There is a plan to rename EM to Nuclear Restoration and Revitalization (NR2). The ECA sponsored sessions at the Waste Management Symposium were –

- US Politics of Cleanup and Cleaning Up DOE Sites Through Appropriations, Authorization and Policy Decisions
- Focusing on US Legacy HLW, and SNF - Moving the Process Forward
- Reusing US DOE Sites to Support Mission and Economic Opportunities

The other regular, annual meeting has been the Intergovernmental Meeting, which is organized by the National Association of Governors. This meeting was planned for November 2025, but due to the Federal Government shutdown the meeting has been postponed with a new dates June 23-24 2026 in the Washington DC area. Vice Chair Herrmann is planning on attending in my place. Planning for the New Nuclear Forum in Augusta GA (April 21-24) is continuing. Treasurer duties have included reviewing and approving reimbursements, invoices, and grants. We also have the first audit of the organization underway. Main mission for ECA has been to help secure funding for environmental cleanup and productive re-use across the DOE complex. ECA was also instrumental in helping to create the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. We are going to be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Park on April 8th at Fuller Lodge in the evening (delayed some 6 months by the government shutdown). More recent initiatives for nuclear energy and interim/permanent geological repositories for nuclear waste. To that end ECA develops documents on relevant topics like a “Community Handbook on Nuclear Energy: Understanding Nuclear Energy and Alternatives for the Future” <https://www.energyca.org/handbook-index> and “Ensuring Long-Term Success: Recommendations for the Next Administration on the U.S. Department of Energy’s Environmental Management Mission.” More information is available on their webpage (<https://www.energyca.org/>).

National Association of Counties (NACo). Ryti is one the Vice Chairs of the Environment, Energy, and Land Use (EELU) Policy Committee. Every Councilor can get an account with NACo and this will be useful for seeing of the reports and information available (<https://www.naco.org/>). I encourage Councilors interested in NACo consider joining one of the policy committees.

Environment, Energy & Land Use (EELU) Policy Steering Committee. Member since February 2023, Vice Chair of Energy Subcommittee in 2023-2024 and Chair of Energy Subcommittee in 2024-2025, and one of the Vice Chairs of the Committee in 2025-2026. Successful interim policy statement in support of energy communities infrastructure funding, and changes to platform to clarify support for consent-based siting of nuclear waste. Co-sponsor of regulatory reform interim policy statement. EELU has monthly meetings with a different speaker each month. The current Committee Chair, Supervisor Mike Turner of Loudoun County Virginia has been coordinating speakers on meeting the greatly expanding power needs in both his region and nationally due to higher demand from data center, AI, and the general trend to electrification.

I was a co-sponsor of the “Proposed Interim Resolution in Support of Maintaining or Increasing Funding Levels for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds” that was approved at the February NACo Legislative Conference. Some resources and topics of interest from the Legislative Conference include –

- Data center alley white paper –
<https://www.loudoun.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/13979>
- NOAA drought monitoring, NIDIS, <https://www.drought.gov/about>,
<https://www.drought.gov/states/new-mexico>, Elizabeth.ossowski@noaa.gov
- Regulatory outlook - Data centers/AI
 - Mar 11 2026, will see the hit list for preemption
 - June 2026 FCC start drafting regs
- Waters of the United States, <https://www.epa.gov/wotus>, new rule post Sackett
- Funding for water infrastructure, US Water Alliance www.thevalueofwater.org

The March meeting had information on the rural energy initiative with resources available on NACo web site --

- [Energizing Counties Resource Hub | National Association of Counties](#) - Primers can be found in the NACo Series section about halfway down the webpage
- <https://www.naco.org/program/rural-energy-academy>
- <https://www.naco.org/program/building-resilient-economies-coal-communities>
- <https://www.naco.org/program/energy>

Resilient Counties Initiative. Member in 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. Attending meetings to hear lessons learned on natural disasters and mitigation planning best practices from around the country. I received a NACo Presidential appointment to this initiative for 2025-2026. Resilient Counties has an ongoing initiative for Rural Energy.

New Mexico Counties (NMC) Board of Directors. Elected to represent Los Alamos County in 2025 and that term will expire at the end of 2026. Entire board meets roughly quarterly. We vote to support or oppose legislation prior to and during the State Legislature sessions. Other meetings presentations on topics of interest to NMC and approve recommendations on changes to NM State Law. There are also affiliate groups for County elected officials (Commissioners, Clerks, Assessors, Sheriffs, Treasurers) and some non-elected (e.g., Managers, Attorneys). There is a Board meeting coming up in May in Torrence County and the annual meeting coming in June in McKinley County.

New Mexico Counties Insurance Authority (NMCIA) Board. Appointed to represent Los Alamos County in 2023. One annual meeting for the full board annually. Los Alamos County gets its worker's compensation insurance through NMCIA. See the webpage for more information (<https://nmcountyinsuranceauthority.org/>).

New Mexico Municipal League Self-Insurers Fund Board of Trustees (NMML SIF BOT). Elected to Board in 2019. This Board meets roughly quarterly and reviews/adopts updates to policy, receives information on the SIF initiatives, approves financials and rate schedules. We had one Board of Trustee meeting in March to approve some policies and a new Trustee. We get most of our insurance through the SIF. Los Alamos County was one of the founding members of the SIF. More information is available on their webpage (<https://nmml.org/161/Insurance>); meetings of the Trustees are public, and information packages can be found on the calendar.

NACo Legislative Conference Notes

General information

“We are Counties” initiative - <https://www.naco.org/wearecounties>

Guide for Effective Federal Policy Advocacy

- <https://www.naco.org/resource/counties-congress-your-guide-effective-federal-policy-advocacy-washington-dc>

SPEED act

- [H.R.4776 - SPEED Act 119th Congress \(2025-2026\)Congress.govhttps://www.congress.gov › bill › house-bill](https://www.congress.gov/bills/119/house-bills/4776)

NEPA reform

- [Legislative Analysis: What New NEPA Guidelines Mean for Counties | National Association of Counties](#)

Resilient Counties meeting

- Lori Hodges Larimer County CO
 - Social capital
- Janice Ikeda Vibrant HI
 - Biology and physics, notice what’s strong not what’s wrong
- Will McDowell EDF
 - Experience with hurricanes in NC from the 1990s on
 - 90% of counties had federally declared disasters
- Multiple lines of defense
- FEMA BRIC
- DOT PROTECT fund
- Insurance
- Community led projects and planning

WIR meeting

- LASSO Act
- Multiple use doctrine
- Mental health first aid
 - [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#)

- [Legacy - Mental Health in Colorado's Modern Day Agriculture YouTube - Colorado Department of Agriculture Apr 12, 2024](#)
- Endangered species act, sections 4 and 7 Nov 2025
 - [The Endangered Species Act Amendments Act of 2025 House Committee on Natural Resources https://naturalresources.house.gov › the-endangered-spec...](#)
- National Center for Public Lands Counties
 - [National Center for Public Lands Counties | National Association of Counties](#)

Federal advocacy update

- [2026 NACo Federal Policy Priorities | National Association of Counties](#)
- [Continuum of Care Program | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

Arts and cultural innovation meeting

- Federal update Jay Dick
 - Not just the SOBs
- [Americans for the Arts |](#)
- Rural placemaking & small business developments in Cameron Co PA
 - PA wilds
 - The Artisan Center Cameron Co COC: artists, commercial kitchen [used to be a restaurant], radio station
- Building sustainable local arts ecosystems
 - Maryland State Arts Council
 - <https://msac.org/sites/default/files/2026-02/2026%20EIR%20WEB-compressed.pdf>

Plastic Waste and Pollution Listening Session at the Legislative Conference. Pew found your feedback very helpful. Pew has shared the following few links and additional information.

Pew global report that was released in December, “[Breaking the Plastic Wave 2025: An Assessment of the Global System and Strategies for Transformative Change.](#)” This report is an update to and expansion of BPW1 that builds on data that has become available over the past five years to examine all major sectors of the global plastic system.

The national analysis highlighted in remarks is “[*Modeling policy options for reducing plastic packaging waste and microplastics in the United States.*](#)”

Among the key findings are that:

- An additional 1 billion tons of plastic MSW could be generated by 2040, leading to more than 30 million tons of pollution in U.S. lands and waterways.
- Managing plastic MSW could cost taxpayers nearly \$37 billion annually by 2040—a 30% increase over current costs.
- A combination of policies – including material elimination and design optimization, reuse, collection for recycling, and a bottle bill - could reduce plastic packaging waste by 29% and pollution by 35%.
- The amount of annual microplastic pollution from just two sources, tires and textiles, could be equivalent to that from plastic packaging pollution by 2040 – 1.2 million tons.

Accompanying the research white paper, Pew and our partners also published a [joint statement with recommendations](#) to reduce plastic waste and pollution, as well as a [web article](#) highlighting additional key findings.

Finally, the link to Pew’s plastics project for additional information, can be found [here](#).