



2017 NATaT Federal Platform



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Federal Priorities for the 115th Congress

Tax Priorities

Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds

NATaT supports preserving the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that have helped build public infrastructure for more than 200 years. These bonds enable state and local governments to access necessary capital for critical infrastructure projects. NATaT also supports legislation that would treat certain municipal bonds as high quality liquid assets when calculating a bank's liquidity coverage ratio. Excluding municipal bonds will result in higher borrowing costs for local governments.

Federal Deductibility of State and Local Taxes and Home Mortgage Interest

NATaT supports the federal deductibility of state and local property and income taxes, as well as the home mortgage interest deduction.

Tax Incentives for Volunteer First Responders

NATaT supports Congressional efforts to provide small tax incentives to recruit and retain volunteer fire and emergency management personnel. Volunteer firefighters alone save communities of all sizes \$129 billion a year, and represent 71% of all firefighters in the U.S. Of the total number of volunteer firefighters, 95% service communities with a population of 25,000 or less.

Cadillac Tax

NATaT supports continued efforts to repeal the "Cadillac Tax," which imposes a 40% excise tax on certain employer-provided healthcare plans.

Online Sales Tax

NATaT supports efforts to require online and catalog retailers (remote sellers) to collect sales tax, just as local retailers are required to do. Legislation is needed to allow local and state governments to enforce their own sales and use tax laws on remote sellers and collect an estimated \$26.1 billion per year.

Infrastructure Priorities

Broadband

Broadband Access

NATaT supports efforts to ensure that all households have access to high-speed broadband. In addition to increased federal funding for programs to accelerate broadband deployment, NATaT supports "dig once" initiatives that encourage conduit to be installed in roadway construction projects that use federal funds. NATaT supports the inclusion of broadband in any infrastructure package introduced by Congress or the Administration.

Rural Broadband Congressional Caucus

NATaT supports the efforts of the Rural Broadband Caucus in both the House and Senate to facilitate discussion, educate Members of Congress, and develop policy solutions to close the digital divide in rural America.

Transportation

Rural Set-Asides

NATaT supports the existing set-asides for rural projects in various transportation programs and wants to ensure that those set-asides are preserved. NATaT also wants to ensure that the federal Department of Transportation understands the reality of the current “rural” definition, which is an area that is outside an urbanized area with a population of over 200,000. To our nation’s towns and townships, 200,000 is not “rural.”

Oppose Efforts to Allow Larger, Heavier Trucks on Our Roads and Bridges

NATaT opposes efforts to increase the national truck weight limit on the federal highway system, and efforts to allow longer double- and triple-trailer trucks on federal highways.

Caution Against Efforts to Implement Vehicle Miles Traveled Fees

NATaT wants to ensure that any effort to impose VMT fees takes into account the limited transportation options for rural residents and the resulting need to use their vehicles to access work and daily services.

Unfunded Mandates and Federal Preemption

Protect Towns and Townships from Increased Federal Regulations

NATaT opposes efforts to expand federal regulations that result in significant increased costs at the local level. More specifically, we encourage a review and re-write of the “*Waters of the U.S.*” or “*WOTUS*” rule that expanded the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. Additionally, NATaT opposes the *Department of Labor’s overtime rule*. While we support increased pay for extra work, the proposed increase under the rule would severely impact local government budgets across the country.

Protect Local Control Over Local Issues

NATaT opposes federal government involvement in issues that should be resolved at the local level by elected public officials who are closest to the people effected. The federal government should limit its involvement in issues such as personnel matters, land use decisions, economic development, and delivery of local government services, and give local elected officials maximum flexibility in selecting the best options to achieve local priorities. For example, local control must be preserved over distributed antenna systems (DAS) and these systems must continue to meet local land use and rights of way regulations. DAS should not be given eminent domain authority or be granted public utility status to access rights of way without restriction.

Federal Funding

Maintain Federal Support for Local Priorities

NATaT supports efforts to control federal spending but supports increased, or at least level funding for those federal programs that promote local economic development and create jobs. They include: USDA’s Rural Development programs; FEMA’s State and Local Programs, namely the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program; and Economic Development Administration programs.

Fair Allocation Policies

NATaT supports allocation policies that are fair to towns and townships. A disproportionate amount of federal program dollars are directed to larger metropolitan communities, such as federal transportation funds. While those communities have significant needs, so do our nation’s smaller communities. Allowing smaller local governments to access funding directly, and in the same manner as large municipalities, will enhance job creation and economic development in communities throughout the country.

The National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT) is the voice for more than 10,000 towns and townships across the country seeking to enhance the ability of smaller communities to deliver public services, economic vitality, and good government to their citizens. America's towns and townships seek to partner with the federal government to ensure that public laws, policies, regulations, and resources support our role in fostering local democracy.

There are approximately 39,000 units of local government in the United States. Of that number, 85 percent serve communities with less than 10,000 people and nearly half have fewer than 1,000 residents. Approximately one quarter of all Americans live in rural areas, roughly the same percentage as live in central cities. NATaT was formed more than 40 years ago to provide those smaller communities a strong voice in Washington, D.C. NATaT's purpose today, as it was then, is to champion pro-town and -township federal initiatives and to promote legislative and regulatory policies designed to strengthen smaller units of local government.

NATaT has developed a proactive federal agenda to ensure that the needs and interests of the nation's smaller communities are reflected in all major federal statutory, regulatory, funding, and policy decisions made in Washington. NATaT is eager to work in collaboration with the other local government associations, the Administration, and Congress to achieve these goals.

NATaT members include town and township officials represented by the following state associations:

Connecticut Council of Small Towns

Township Officials of Illinois

Michigan Townships Association

Minnesota Association of Townships

Association of Towns of the State of New York

Ohio Township Association

Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

Wisconsin Towns Association



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