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## Welcome to NATaT's Virtual Town Hall and Legislative Advocacy Fly-In

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### What is in your packet?

- ✓ Schedule for Virtual Town Hall
- ✓ NATaT Federal Platform (sent to Hill offices in advance)
- ✓ NATaT Issue Papers (sent to Hill offices in advance)
- ✓ Talking Points for Advocacy Meetings
- ✓ Congressional Assignments of NATaT Delegations
- ✓ Copy of Advocacy Prep Webinar (recording can be found [here](#) with Passcode: SQU?B7!e)

On behalf of the NATaT Board of Directors and staff, thank you for taking the time to participate in this exciting event.

Your voice matters!



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## 2022 NATaT Virtual Town Hall

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**Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 1:00 – 4:00 PM EST**

*Zoom links will be sent to all registrants Wednesday morning*

- 1:00 PM Welcome and Overview of NATaT's Priorities and Recent Successes
- 1:25 PM Remarks from US Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg
- 1:30 PM Presentation by Xochitl Torres Small, Under Secretary for Rural Development, US Department of Agriculture
- 2:00 PM Community Facilities Loan/Grant Program Panel Discussion
- Chad Parker, Deputy Administrator for Community Programs, USDA
  - Ed Good, Mead Township, OH, CF Loan/Grant Recipient
  - TBD
- 3:00 PM Connecting Your Community Panel Discussion
- Teresa Ferguson, Senior Director, Broadband and Infrastructure Funding, National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative
  - Jake Varn, Principal Associate, Policy and Engagement, Broadband Access Initiative, Pew Charitable Trust
  - Christopher Mitchell, Director of the Community Broadband Networks Initiative, Institute for Local Self Reliance

Invited Speakers (unable to participate)

Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications and Technology

**May 12-13, 2022 – Legislative Advocacy Meetings**

*Check with your state staff for schedules; you will receive a Zoom link for all meetings.*



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# 2022 NATaT Federal Platform



[www.natat.org](http://www.natat.org)



# 2022 Federal Priorities

## Infrastructure

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### Transportation

- In future authorization bills, NATaT wants to ensure that any effort to impose vehicle miles traveled fees considers the limited transportation options for rural residents and the resulting need to use their vehicles to access work and daily services.
- NATaT supports federal efforts to invest in electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure. However, we are concerned about the lack of access to this infrastructure in our more rural areas. As such, NATaT supports Congressional and Administration efforts to ensure funding for EV infrastructure is available to rural communities.
- NATaT opposes efforts to increase the national truck weight limit on the federal highway system, and efforts to allow longer, wider double- and triple-trailer trucks on federal highways.
- NATaT encourages the US Department of Transportation (DOT) to prioritize funding projects in rural areas. NATaT also wants to ensure that DOT understands the reality of the current “rural” definition, which is an area that is outside an urbanized area with a population of less than 200,000. To our nation’s towns and townships, 200,000 is not “rural.”
- NATaT supports efforts to increase the federal volunteer driver mileage reimbursement (14¢/mile) to equal the federal business driver mileage reimbursement (58.5¢/mile).

### Telecommunications and Cybersecurity

- NATaT supports federal efforts to ensure that all locations have access to high-speed broadband with a primary focus on deployment in non-urban, rural areas where access is the most limited. Congress and the Administration should prioritize increased funding for broadband infrastructure deployment to both unserved and underserved areas and support federal programs that benefit satellite internet services that can provide universal access. In addition, NATaT supports efforts to create strong partnerships between local, state, and federal partners to maximize funds available for broadband deployment.
- NATaT supports federal efforts to streamline broadband infrastructure deployment *without* preempting local control over public rights-of-way, permitting, and siting processes – tenets of a community’s right to self-govern.

- NATaT opposes federal efforts that restrict local governments, cooperatives, and utilities from providing broadband services.
- NATaT supports federal efforts to improve broadband mapping. Current broadband maps are inadequate and do not accurately depict broadband service.
- NATaT supports federal efforts to reform the Universal Service Fund contribution mechanisms that will create sustainable funding for the Connect America Fund, Lifeline, Schools and Libraries, and Rural Health Care programs.
- NATaT supports federal efforts to provide technical assistance and funding to local governments to mitigate cybersecurity risks.
- 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.

## **Volunteer First Responders**

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NATaT supports Congressional efforts to establish incentive programs to recruit and retain volunteer first responders. 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.

- NATaT supports the Volunteer First Responder Housing Act that would expand existing federal housing assistance programs to qualified volunteer first responders.

## **Census**

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According to the Census Bureau, “Legally defined county subdivisions are referred to as minor civil divisions (MCDs). MCDs are the primary divisions of a county. They comprise both governmentally functioning entities — that is, those with elected or appointed officials who provide services and raise revenues — and nonfunctioning entities that exist primarily for administrative purposes, such as election districts.”

Twenty states have MCDs that function as general-purpose governmental units. Those 20 states are divided into two categories: strong MCDs and weak MCDs. The following NATaT-member states are categorized as strong MCDs that serve as general-purpose local governments: Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The states of Illinois, North Dakota, and Ohio are classified as weak MCDs because, according to the Census Bureau, they perform less of a governmental role and are less well known locally, even though they are active governmental units.

NATaT wants the Census Bureau to reassess how it defines weak MCDs. Townships in Ohio and Illinois, for example, are general purpose governmental units that provide governmental functions including road maintenance, fire, police and EMS services, economic development, solid waste, cemeteries, parks and recreation, and senior services.

## Federal Funding

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- NATaT supports efforts to control federal spending but supports increased, or at least level funding for those federal programs that promote local economic development, create jobs, and generate tax revenues to all levels of government. They include USDA's Rural Development programs; FEMA's State and Local Programs, particularly Fire Act Grants; Economic Development Administration programs; and National Telecommunications and Information Administration broadband-related programs.
- NATaT supports budget allocation policies that are fair to towns and townships. A disproportionate amount of federal funds is directed to larger metropolitan communities. Notably, larger communities have significant needs, but 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. NATaT supports direct funding for ALL units of local government as included in the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. No. 117-2).

## Tax

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- 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 reinstating advance refunding bonds to allow a community to refinance a municipal bond and maintain the bond's tax-exempt status.
- NATaT supports the efforts of the House Municipal Finance Caucus as a forum to discuss the opportunities and challenges for local governments to fund initiatives that strengthen our communities, and to advocate for bipartisan policies that enhance our access to the capital markets.

## Unfunded Mandates and Federal Preemption

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- NATaT strongly supports legislation that would require the federal government to provide adequate and necessary funding sufficient to implement and administer any mandate imposed on local government.
- 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 affected. 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.
- NATaT supports a common-sense definition of the "*Waters of the U.S.*" rule without unnecessarily expanding the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act.
- As mentioned in the "Broadband" section of the platform, NATaT supports preserving long-standing local zoning authorities in the deployment of emerging technologies, like small cell 5G. That authority is essential to protecting the safety of our residents.



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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:**

Township Officials of Illinois

Michigan Townships Association

Minnesota Association of Townships

Association of Towns of the State of New York

North Dakota Township Officers Association

Ohio Township Association

Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

Wisconsin Towns Association

**[www.natat.org](http://www.natat.org)**

For more information, contact

NATaT Federal Director Jennifer Imo  
at 202.454.3947/[jimo@tfgnet.com](mailto:jimo@tfgnet.com)

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## Tax Priorities

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### Federal Gas Tax Holiday

#### **NATaT opposes a federal gas tax holiday as it will stall essential infrastructure projects in our states.**

NATaT understands the impact of high gas prices on our members and all Americans. However, creating a federal gas tax holiday is not the right solution. As such, NATaT does not support the **Gas Prices Relief Act of 2022 (H.R. 6787/S. 3609)**, which would suspend the current 18.4 cents-per-gallon federal gasoline tax until January 1, 2023. The tax holiday is an ineffective immediate approach to an issue needing long-term solutions.

The temporary elimination of federal gas taxes would take revenues from the Highway Trust Fund (an estimated loss of over \$20 billion), creating an irreversible impact on many of our communities. Some NATaT-member states are already implementing state gas tax holidays, which decreases our state revenue source for important infrastructure projects. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created significant opportunities for us to shore up our crumbling infrastructure. Losing a reliable federal revenue source for transportation projects will stall our efforts to improve essential transportation infrastructure in our communities.

### Volunteer Driver Mileage Reimbursement

#### **NATaT supports increasing the federal tax deduction mileage rate for volunteer drivers.**

NATaT supports the **Volunteer Driver Tax Appreciation Act of 2022 (H.R. 7432)**, which would increase the federal tax deduction mileage rate for volunteer drivers from its current rate of 14 cents per mile to 58.5 cents per mile, equal to the IRS' business rate.

Volunteer drivers play an essential role in our communities, from meal delivery to expanding access to healthcare. These drivers help remove barriers for community members who are struggling to access critical services. With rising gas prices and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, finding volunteer drivers has become increasingly difficult. NATaT supports increasing the tax reimbursement to help incentivize and appropriately reimburse these volunteers that provide an invaluable service to our communities.



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May 3, 2022

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
S-221, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy,

The National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT) represents more than 10,000 towns and townships around the country. As the voice of America's smaller local governments, many in our nation's most rural locations, we believe it is imperative to share our concerns regarding the potential of a federal gas tax holiday.

While NATaT understands the challenges Americans are facing with high gas prices, we implore leadership to avoid choosing a gas tax holiday as the solution. The tax holiday would promote an ineffective immediate approach to an issue needing long-term solutions. Many supporting the holiday acknowledge the lack of actual savings yielded directly to Americans. NATaT is grateful for the hard work from Congress in passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). As you well know, the Highway Trust Fund is critical to infrastructure maintenance and improvements. A gas tax holiday would work to undo the progress made by BIL before implementation can get off the ground.

Experts and Members of both parties have spoken out against this initiative. The currently introduced legislation, the **Gas Prices Relief Act** (H.R. 6787/S. 3609), would suspend the current 18.4 cents-per-gallon federal gasoline tax until January 1, 2023. The temporary elimination of federal gas taxes would take revenues from the Highway Trust Fund (an estimated loss of over \$20 billion), creating an irreversible impact on many communities NATaT represents. Our communities would face significant detrimental consequences from losing a reliable federal revenue source for the construction of infrastructure projects sorely in need of completion.

NATaT appreciates your continued work for local governments of all sizes and urges you to join us in opposition to this effort. If you need additional information or have any questions, please contact our Federal Director, Jennifer Imo, at [jimo@tfgnet.com](mailto:jimo@tfgnet.com) or 202.454.3947.

Sincerely,

Mike Koles  
President, NATaT  
Executive Director, Wisconsin Towns Association



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## Support for Volunteer First Responders

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NATaT supports Congressional efforts to provide enhanced resources 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. Volunteer first responders provide the first line of defense for many types of emergencies, including fires, emergency medical incidents, terrorist events, natural disasters, and other public service calls. Recent reports, however, demonstrate that the number of volunteer firefighters has declined drastically due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining these essential volunteers.

The **Volunteer First Responder Housing Act (H.R. 4377/S. 2316)** would open existing affordable housing opportunities to provide an incentive for volunteer firefighters and other responders. The bill expands eligibility for volunteer first responders to participate in certain federal housing assistance programs. The bill makes it possible for more volunteer emergency responders to participate in the Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. This program assists approved lenders in providing loans to low- and moderate- income households to build, rehabilitate, or improve a home in eligible rural areas. The bill will allow volunteers to participate in the loan program even if their income exceeds the maximum allowable income level by up to \$18,000. The bill also makes volunteer first responders eligible to participate in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program. This program gives law enforcement officers, teachers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians a 50 percent discount from the list price of a home located in a revitalization area.

Reasonable incentives for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel serve as important recruitment and retention tools for local emergency response departments who are struggling to meet increased demand for their services.

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## Broadband and Cybersecurity Priorities

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Roughly seven-in-ten rural Americans (72%) say they have a broadband internet connection at home, according to a Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted in January 2021. While broadband adoption has not significantly increased for urban and suburban Americans in the last five years, rural residents have seen a nine-percentage point rise in home broadband adoption since 2016. Despite the rise in rural adoption, rural residents are still less likely than those living in suburban areas to report having home broadband. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) finds that approximately 17 percent of Americans in rural areas still lack coverage from fixed terrestrial 25/3 Mbps broadband.

Historic amounts of funding have been recently allocated to support programs aimed at solving the digital divide, especially in rural America. From the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), billions of dollars are available for broadband deployment, affordability, and digital equity efforts. Working in collaboration with broadband service providers, NATaT is committed to bringing accessible and reliable high-speed internet to both unserved and underserved areas within its member states.

Local government, including towns and townships, will play an important role in helping federal and state policymakers increase access to broadband service. The IIJA explicitly requires states to collaborate with local governments when developing state broadband plans to implement IIJA broadband grant programs, such as the \$42.5 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment grant program that is designed to connect rural America.

### Broadband Deployment

#### NATaT Supports Helping Rural Communities Access EDA Grants for Broadband Deployment.

NATaT supports the **Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility (E-BRIDGE) Act (S. 1695)**, which would provide rural communities with access to Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants to develop high-speed broadband. The bill removes hurdles for broadband projects under EDA grants, including difficult last-mile efforts that often delay rural broadband deployment. Specifically, the legislation would clarify that eligible recipients may include public-private partnerships and consortiums to leverage private sector expertise in project development and clarify that funds can be combined with other federal resources. The House version of this bill (**H.R. 3193**) passed on November 4, 2021, with a vote of 410 – 16.

### Federal Preemption

#### NATaT Supports Municipal Broadband Authority.

The **Community Broadband Act (H.R. 1631/S. 1460)** would authorize local communities to build and maintain their own Internet infrastructure by prohibiting laws in states that ban or limit the ability of state, regional, and local governments to build broadband networks and provide Internet services.

The legislation would also overturn state laws that restrict cooperatives' ability to provide Internet services, as well as laws that restrain public agencies from entering public-private partnerships.

## NATaT Supports Reversal of Franchise Fee Order.

NATaT opposes any federal efforts that further limit the authority of local franchising authorities (LFAs) to regulate and assess fees on cable operators and other providers of wireline video and broadband services. In August 2019, the FCC adopted new rules that permit cable operators to reduce their franchise fee payments by the fair market value of their non-cash "in-kind" contributions.<sup>1</sup> The rule change meant that any non-monetary benefit negotiated by an LFA in a franchise agreement could be charged back against franchise fees, including institutional networks, complimentary cable service to government buildings, electronic program guides, and the value of PEG channel capacity itself. Congress did not intend these in-kind obligations to be franchise fees and neither the plain language nor the legislative history of the Cable Act supports the Commission's adoption of the new rules.

NATaT backs the **Support the Protecting Community Television Act (H.R. 6219/S. 3361)**, which would reverse the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) 2019 order requiring that cable-related, in-kind contributions be subjected to the statutory five percent franchise fee cap.

## Cybersecurity

### NATaT Supports Efforts to Enhance State and Local Cybersecurity.

State and local governments increasingly find themselves targeted by high-profile cyber attacks, costing taxpayers millions of dollars and threatening the data privacy of millions of Americans. NATaT supports the **State and Local Government Cybersecurity Act (H.R. 5960)**, which would facilitate coordination between the Department of Homeland Security and state and local governments, as well as corporations, associations, and the general public regarding cybersecurity. The Senate version of this bill (**S. 2520**) passed unanimously on January 11, 2022.

The legislation would permit the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) to provide state and local actors with access to improved security tools, policies, and procedures, while also encouraging collaboration for the effective implementation of those resources, including joint cybersecurity exercises, and the promotion of cybersecurity education and awareness.

The legislation would also build on previous efforts by the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to prevent, protect, and respond to future cybersecurity incidents. These changes would also ensure that government officials and their staff have access to the hardware and software products needed to bolster their cyber defenses.

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<sup>1</sup> FCC, Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as Amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, MB Docket No. 05-311, 3<sup>rd</sup> Report and Order (released Aug. 2, 2019)(see [Link](#)).

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# Talking Points for Congressional Meetings

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## Tax Issues

*Senate Finance/House Ways & Means*

### **NATaT Opposes Federal Gas Tax Holiday.**

The **Gas Prices Relief Act** ([H.R. 6787/S. 3609](#)), would suspend the current 18.4 cents-per-gallon federal gasoline tax until January 1, 2023.

The result of this gas tax holiday is an estimated loss of over \$20 billion from the Highway Trust Fund.

There's no guarantee a gas tax holiday would lower gas prices for consumers because oil companies could still raise prices.

Many of our states are already realizing the lost revenue from state gas tax holidays.

The lost revenue will severely limit the transportation infrastructure projects – both planned and ongoing – thereby limiting the impact of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

#### **NATaT Cosponsors:**

- Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
- Rep. Daniel Kildee (D-MI)
- Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI)
- Rep. Joseph Morrelle (D-NY)
- Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY)
- Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA)
- Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN)

### **NATaT Supports Increased Tax Incentive for Volunteer Drivers.**

The **Volunteer Driver Tax Appreciation Act** ([H.R. 7432](#)) would increase the federal tax deduction mileage rate for the charitable use of an automobile (14 cents per mile) to the standard business mileage rate (58.5 cents per mile in 2022). (There is no Senate counterpart.)

Volunteer drivers help our community members gain access to critical services and necessities.

Increasing gas prices, coupled with the pandemic, will continue to deter individuals from volunteering their time.

The current rate of 14 cents/mile pales in comparison to the standard business mileage rate of 58.5 cents per mile.

Increasing the reimbursement will help incentivize volunteers and appropriately reimburse them for their efforts.

**NATaT Cosponsors:**

- Rep. Pete Stauber (D-MN)
- Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN)

**Volunteer First Responders**

*Senate Banking Housing and Urban Affairs/House Financial Services*

**NATaT Supports Incentives for Volunteer First Responders.**

The **Volunteer First Responder Housing Act** ([H.R. 4377/S. 2316](#)) would give volunteer emergency responders the opportunity to participate in USDA’s Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program and HUD’s Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program (currently only available to paid firefighters/EMTs, law enforcement officers, and teachers).

The number of volunteer firefighters is declining drastically due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining these essential volunteers.

Volunteer firefighters alone save communities of all sizes an estimated \$129 billion a year, and represent 71% of all firefighters in the U.S.

Access to programs like these two from USDA and HUD serve as important recruitment and retention tools for local fire/EMS departments who are struggling to meet increased demand for their services.

**NATaT Cosponsors:**

- Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
- Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)
- Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL)
- Rep. Andrew Garbarino (R-NY)
- Rep. Claudia Tenney (R-NY)

**Broadband and Telecom Priorities**

*House Energy and Commerce; Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation*

**NATaT Supports Helping Rural Communities Access EDA Grants for Broadband Deployment.**

The **Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility (E-BRIDGE) Act** ([S. 1695](#)) would provide rural communities with access to Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants to develop high-speed broadband.

The bill removes hurdles for broadband projects under EDA grants, including difficult last-mile efforts that often delay rural broadband deployment.

Specifically, the E-Bridge Act would:

- Clarify that eligible recipients may include public-private partnerships and consortiums to leverage private sector expertise in project development.
- Provide flexibility in the procurement process to account for limited availability of broadband services in distressed communities.
- Clarify that funds can be combined with other federal resources.
- Provide flexibility on accounting for in-kind methods to meet non-federal cost share.

The House companion bill ([H.R. 3193](#)) passed the lower chamber last November with the support of the following NATaT cosponsors: Reps. Pete Stauber (R-MN); Elise Stefanik (R-NY); Fred Keller (R-PA); and Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA).

## **NATaT Supports Municipal Broadband Authority.**

The **Community Broadband Act** ([H.R. 1631/S. 1460](#)) would authorize local communities to build and maintain their own Internet infrastructure by prohibiting laws in states that ban or limit the ability of state, regional, and local governments to build broadband networks and provide Internet services.

The legislation would also overturn state laws that restrict cooperatives' ability to provide Internet services, as well as laws that restrain public agencies from entering public-private partnerships.

### **NATaT Cosponsors:**

- Rep. Jamaal Bowman (D-NY)
- Sen. Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY)

## **NATaT Supports Reversal of Franchise Fee Order.**

The **Support the Protecting Community Television Act** ([H.R. 6219/S. 3361](#)) would reverse the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) 2019 order requiring that cable-related, in-kind contributions be subjected to the statutory five percent franchise fee cap.

Currently, local governments are permitted to require, as part of cable franchise agreements, that cable companies meet demonstrated community needs by providing in-kind contributions that benefit schools, public safety buildings, and public, educational, and government (PEG) channels, also known as community television stations.

However, in August 2019, the FCC voted to permit cable companies to assign a value to these contributions and then subtract that amount from the franchise fees the cable operator pays the local community. As a result, local governments must decide between supporting PEG stations in cable franchise agreements and supporting other important services for critical community institutions like schools and libraries.

### **NATaT Cosponsors:**

- Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY)
- Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)

- Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN)
- Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI)
- Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI)
- Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
- Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
- Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
- Sen. Kristen Gillibrand (D-MN)
- Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN)
- Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI)

## **NATaT Supports Efforts to Enhance the State and Local Cybersecurity.**

State and local governments increasingly find themselves targeted by high-profile cyberattacks, costing taxpayers millions of dollars and threatening the data privacy of millions of Americans.

The **State and Local Government Cybersecurity Act (H.R. 5960)** would facilitate coordination between the Department of Homeland Security and state and local governments, as well as corporations, associations, and the general public, regarding cybersecurity.

The legislation would permit the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) to provide state and local actors with access to improved security tools, policies and procedures, while also encouraging collaboration for the effective implementation of those resources, including joint cybersecurity exercises, and the promotion of cybersecurity education and awareness.

The legislation would also build on previous efforts by the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to prevent, protect, and respond to future cybersecurity incidents. These changes would also ensure that government officials and their staff have access to the hardware and software products needed to bolster their cyber defenses.

In January 2022, the Senate passed a companion bill ([S. 2520](#)) introduced by Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and Rob Portman (R-OH).

### **NATaT Cosponsors:**

No cosponsors



## NATaT Members' Congressional Delegations

### Relevant Committee of Jurisdiction over NATaT Priorities

**Gas Tax Holiday; Volunteer Driver Tax Appreciation Act:** Senate Finance/House Ways & Means

**Volunteer First Responder Housing Act:** Senate Banking Housing and Urban Affairs/House Financial Services

**Broadband:** Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation/House Energy & Commerce

[*Italic*] = Democrat

[Underline] = Committee Chair or Ranking Member

## Illinois

### Senate

Name	Committee(s)
<i>Durbin, Dick</i>	<i>Agriculture; Appropriations; Judiciary</i>
<i>Duckworth, Tammy*</i>	<i>Armed Services; <u>Commerce, Science, &amp; Transportation</u>; Environment &amp; Public Works; Small Business &amp; Entrepreneurship; Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis</i>

### House

District	Name	Committee(s)
01	<i>Rush, Bobby L.</i>	<u>Energy &amp; Commerce</u>
02	<i>Kelly, Robin L.</i>	<u>Energy &amp; Commerce</u> ; Oversight & Reform
03	<i>Newman, Marie</i>	Transportation & Infrastructure, Small Business
04	<i>Garcia, Jesus "Chuy"</i>	<u>Financial Services</u> ; Transportation & Infrastructure; Natural Resources
05	<i>Quigley, Mike</i>	Appropriations; Intelligence
06	<i>Casten, Sean</i>	<u>Financial Services</u> ; Science, Space, & Technology; Select Committee on Climate Crisis
07	<i>Davis, Danny K.</i>	<u>Ways &amp; Means</u>
08	<i>Krishnamoorthi, Raj*</i>	Oversight & Reform; Intelligence
09	<i>Schakowsky, Janice</i>	Budget; <u>Energy &amp; Commerce</u>
10	<i>Schneider, Bradley</i>	Small Business; <u>Ways &amp; Means</u>
11	<i>Foster, Bill</i>	Science, Space & Technology; <u>Financial Services</u>
12	<i>Bost, Mike</i>	<u>Veterans' Affairs</u> ; Transportation & Infrastructure
13	<i>Davis, Rodney</i>	<u>Administration</u> ; Agriculture; Transportation & Infrastructure
14	<i>Underwood, Lauren</i>	Appropriations; <u>Veterans' Affairs</u>

15	Miller, Mary	Agriculture; Education & Labor
16	Kinzinger, Adam	Energy & Commerce; Foreign Affairs
17	Bustos, Cheri	Agriculture; Appropriations
18	LaHood, Darin	Joint Economic Committee; Ways & Means

## Michigan

### Senate

Name	Committee(s)
Stabenow, Debbie* (Senior)	Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry; Budget; Environment & Public Works; Finance; Joint Committee on Taxation
Peters, Gary* (Junior)	Homeland Security & Government Affairs; Armed Services; Commerce, Science, & Transportation

### House

District	Name	Committee(s)
01	Bergman, Jack	Armed Services; Veterans' Affairs
02	Huizenga, Bill	Financial Services
03	Meijer, Peter	Foreign Affairs; Homeland Security; Science, Space, & Technology
04	Moolenaar, John	Appropriations
05	Kildee, Daniel	Budget; Ways & Means
06	Upton, Fred	Energy & Commerce
07	Walberg, Tim	Education & Labor; Energy & Commerce
08	Slotkin, Elissa	Armed Services; Homeland Security; Veterans' Affairs
09	Levin, Andy	Education & Labor; Foreign Affairs
10	McClain, Lisa	Armed Services; Education and Labor
11	Stevens, Haley	Education & Labor; Science, Space, & Technology
12	Dingell, Debbie	Energy & Commerce; Natural Resources
13	Tlaib, Rashida	Financial Services; Oversight & Reform
14	Lawrence, Brenda L.	Appropriations; Oversight & Reform

## Minnesota

### Senate

Name	Committee(s)
Klobuchar, Amy* (Senior)	Rules & Administration; Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry; Commerce, Science, & Transportation; Joint Economic Committee; Judiciary
Smith, Tina* (Junior)	Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry; Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs; Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions; Indian Affairs

### House

District	Name	Committee(s)
01	Hagedorn, Jim	Agriculture; Small Business

02	<i>Craig, Angie</i>	<i>Agriculture; Energy &amp; Commerce; Small Business</i>
03	<i>Phillips, Dean</i>	<i>Ethics; Foreign Affairs; Small Business</i>
04	<i>McCollum, Betty</i>	<i>Appropriations; Natural Resources</i>
05	<i>Omar, Ilhan</i>	<i>Budget; Education &amp; Labor; Foreign Affairs</i>
06	<i>Emmer, Tom</i>	<i>Financial Services</i>
07	<i>Fischbach, Michelle</i>	<i>Agriculture; Judiciary; Rules</i>
08	<i>Stauber, Pete</i>	<i>Natural Resources; Transportation &amp; Infrastructure; Small Business</i>

## New York

### Senate

Name	Committee(s)
<i>Schumer, Charles* (Senior)</i>	<i>As Democratic Leader, Schumer does not serve on any committees</i>
<i>Kirsten, Gillibrand* (Junior)</i>	<i>Agriculture, Nutrition, &amp; Forestry; Armed Services; Select Committee on Intelligence; Special Committee on Aging</i>

### House

District	Name	Committee(s)
01	<i>Zeldin, Lee</i>	<i>Financial Services; Foreign Affairs</i>
02	<i>Garbarino, Andrew</i>	<i>Homeland Security; Small Business</i>
03	<i>Suozzi, Tom</i>	<i>Ways &amp; Means</i>
04	<i>Rice, Kathleen</i>	<i>Energy &amp; Commerce; Homeland Security</i>
05	<i>Meeks, Gregory</i>	<i>Financial Services; Foreign Affairs</i>
06	<i>Meng, Grace</i>	<i>Appropriations</i>
07	<i>Velázquez, Nydia</i>	<i>Financial Services; Natural Resources; Small Business</i>
08	<i>Jeffries, Hakeem</i>	<i>Budget; Judiciary</i>
09	<i>Clarke, Yvette</i>	<i>Energy &amp; Commerce; Homeland Security</i>
10	<i>Nadler, Jerry</i>	<i>Judiciary</i>
11	<i>Malliotakis, Nicole</i>	<i>Foreign Affairs; Transportation &amp; Infrastructure</i>
12	<i>Maloney, Carolyn</i>	<i>Financial Services; Joint Economic; Oversight &amp; Reform</i>
13	<i>Español, Adriano</i>	<i>Appropriations; Education &amp; Labor</i>
14	<i>Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria</i>	<i>Financial Services; Oversight &amp; Reform</i>
15	<i>Torres, Ritchie</i>	<i>Financial Services; Homeland Security</i>
16	<i>Bowman, Jamaal</i>	<i>Education &amp; Labor; Science, Space, &amp; Technology</i>
17	<i>Jones, Mondaire</i>	<i>Education &amp; Labor; Ethics; Judiciary</i>
18	<i>Maloney, Sean Patrick</i>	<i>Agriculture; Transportation &amp; Infrastructure</i>
19	<i>Delgado, Antonio</i>	<i>Agriculture; Small Business; Transportation &amp; Infrastructure</i>
20	<i>Tonko, Paul</i>	<i>Energy &amp; Commerce; Natural Resources; Science, Space, &amp; Technology</i>
21	<i>Stefanik, Elise</i>	<i>Armed Services; Education &amp; Labor</i>
22	<i>Tenney, Claudia</i>	<i>N/A – race certified 2/8/21</i>
23	<i>Reed, Tom</i>	<i>Ways &amp; Means</i>
24	<i>Katko, John</i>	<i>Homeland Security; Transportation &amp; Infrastructure</i>
25	<i>Morelle, Joe</i>	<i>Armed Services; Budget; Education &amp; Labor; Rules</i>

26	<i>Higgins, Brian</i>	<i>Budget; Ways &amp; Means</i>
27	Jacobs, Chris	Agriculture; Budget

## North Dakota

### Senate

Name	Committee(s)
Hoeven, John* (Senior)	<u>Indian Affairs</u> ; Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry; Appropriations; Energy & Natural Resources
Cramer, Kevin* (Junior)	Armed Services; <b>Banking, Housing &amp; Urban Affairs</b> ; Budget; Environment & Public Works; Veterans' Affairs

### House

District	Name	Committee(s)
At Large	Armstrong, Kelly	<b>Energy &amp; Commerce</b> ; Ethics

## Ohio

### Senate

Name	Committee(s)
<i>Brown, Sherrod* (Senior)</i>	<b><u>Banking, Housing, &amp; Urban Affairs</u></b> ; <i>Veterans' Affairs; Agriculture, Nutrition, &amp; Forestry; Finance</i>
Portman, Rob (Junior)	Homeland Security & Government Affairs; Foreign Relations; <b>Finance</b>

### House

District	Name	Committee(s)
01	Chabot, Steve	Foreign Affairs, Judiciary
02	Wenstrup, Brad	<b>Ways &amp; Means</b> ; Select Intelligence Committee
03	<i>Beatty, Joyce</i>	<b>Financial Services</b> ; <i>Joint Economic</i>
04	Jordan, Jim	<u>Judiciary</u> ; Oversight & Reform
05	Latta, Bob	<b>Energy &amp; Commerce</b>
06	Johnson, Bill	Budget; <b>Energy &amp; Commerce</b>
07	Gibbs, Bob*	Oversight & Reform; Transportation & Infrastructure
08	Davidson, Warren	<b>Financial Services</b>
09	<i>Kaptur, Marcy</i>	<i>Appropriations</i>
10	Turner, Mike	Armed Services
11	<i>Brown, Shontel</i>	<i>Agriculture; Oversight &amp; Reform</i>
12	Balderson, Troy	Agriculture; Transportation & Infrastructure
13	<i>Ryan, Tim</i>	<i>Appropriations</i>
14	Joyce, Dave	Appropriations
15	Stivers, Steve	<b>Financial Services</b>
16	Gonzalez, Anthony	<b>Financial Services</b> ; Science, Space, & Technology

# Pennsylvania

## Senate

Name	Committee(s)
<i>Casey, Bob* (Senior)</i>	<i>Finance; Health, Education, Labor, &amp; Pensions; Intelligence</i>
Toomey, Pat (Junior)	Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs; Budget; Finance

## House

District	Name	Committee(s)
01	Fitzpatrick, Brian	Foreign Affairs; Transportation & Infrastructure
02	<i>Boyle, Brendan</i>	<i>Budget; Ways &amp; Means</i>
03	<i>Evans, Dwight</i>	<i>Small Business; Ways &amp; Means</i>
04	<i>Dean, Madeleine</i>	<i>Financial Services; Judiciary</i>
05	<i>Scanlon, Mary Gay</i>	<i>House Administration; Judiciary, Rules</i>
06	<i>Houlahan, Chrissy</i>	<i>Armed Services, Foreign Affairs; Small Business</i>
07	<i>Wild, Susan</i>	<i>Education &amp; Labor, Ethics; Foreign Affairs</i>
08	<i>Cartwright, Matt</i>	<i>Appropriations; Natural Resources</i>
09	Meuser, Dan	Small Business; Foreign Affairs
10	Perry, Scott	Foreign Affairs, Transportation & Infrastructure
11	Smucker, Lloyd	Ways & Means
12	Fred Keller	Education & Labor; Oversight & Reform
13	Joyce, John	Energy & Commerce
14	Reschenthaler, Guy	Appropriations; Rules
15	Thompson, Glenn	Agriculture; Education & Labor
16	Kelly, Mike	Ways & Means
17	<i>Lamb, Conor</i>	<i>Science, Space, &amp; Technology; Transportation &amp; Infrastructure; Veterans' Affairs</i>
18	<i>Doyle, Mike</i>	<i>Energy &amp; Commerce</i>

# Wisconsin

## Senate

Name	Committee(s)
Johnson, Ron (Senior)	Budget; Commerce, Science, & Transportation; Foreign Relations; Homeland Security & Government Affairs
<i>Baldwin, Tammy* (Junior)</i>	<i>Appropriations; Commerce, Science, &amp; Transportation; Health, Education, Labor, &amp; Pensions</i>

## House

District	Name	Committee(s)
01	Steil, Bryan	Financial Services; House Administration
02	<i>Pocan, Mark</i>	<i>Appropriations; Education &amp; Labor</i>
03	<i>Kind, Ron</i>	<i>Ways &amp; Means</i>
04	<i>Moore, Gwen</i>	<i>Ways &amp; Means</i>

05	Fitzgerald, Scott	Education & Labor; Judiciary; Small Business
06	Grothman, Glenn	Budget; Education & Labor; Oversight & Reform
07	Tiffany, Tom	Judiciary; Science, Natural Resources
08	Gallagher, Mike	Armed Services; Transportation & Infrastructure

# Prep Session for 2022 Virtual Town Hall and Legislative Fly-In

May 9, 2022



**2022 Virtual Town Hall and Fly-In**

# LOGISTICS

## Wednesday, May 11 – Virtual Town Hall – 1:00 – 4:00 PM EST

- 1:00 PM Welcome and Overview of NATaT's Recent Successes
- 1:25 PM Remarks from USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg
- 1:30 PM Presentation by Xochitl Torres Small, Under Secretary for Rural Development, US Department of Agriculture
- 2:00 PM Community Facilities Loan/Grant Program Panel Discussion
- Chad Parker, Deputy Administrator for Community Programs, USDA
  - Ed Good, Mead Township, OH Recipient
  - TBD
- 3:00 PM Connecting Your Community Panel Discussion
- Teresa Ferguson, Senior Director, Broadband and Infrastructure Funding, National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative
  - Jake Varn, Principal Associate, Policy and Engagement, Broadband Access Initiative, Pew Charitable Trust
  - Christopher Mitchell, Director of the Community Broadband Networks Initiative, Institute for Local Self Reliance

### Invited Speakers

Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI) (unable to participate)



# 2022 Virtual Town Hall and Fly-In

# LOGISTICS

## Thursday, May 12 – Virtual Legislative Advocacy Meetings

Schedules to be provided by your state staff.

Later today you will receive a packet of information that includes:

- Wednesday's Town Hall Schedule
- NATaT's Federal Platform
- Issue Papers
- Talking Points
- Committee Assignments for Members of Congress/Senators
- Copy of this Power Point

# How Will the Meetings Work?

- You will be emailed a link to the meeting.
- Sign on 5 minutes early, if possible.
- Decide in advance who will speak on behalf of your group for each issue.
- Each office will have position papers and the NATaT Federal Platform, so you can reference those docs.
- NATaT staff will be with IL, MI, MN.

# How Will the Meetings Work?

- At the beginning of the meeting - if the meeting is with staff only - try to make a personal connection:
  - Where are you from? Where did you go to school?
- Start with brief summary of meeting topic/priorities.
  - Check cosponsor list before each meeting to note if they are already in support of the issue.
  - Check the committee assignment chart before the meeting so you know which priority to focus most of your time on.
- Share a story (how the issue impacts your community; anecdotes are key).
- Follow up! NATaT staff will take the lead, but it's always good for them to hear from you again via email; connect on social media (*e.g.*, Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

# WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES?

1. Tax Priorities: Gas Tax Holiday, Volunteer Driver Reimbursement
2. Incentives for Volunteer First Responders
3. Broadband/Cybersecurity

# Tax Priorities

## Opposition to Federal Gas Tax Holiday

- The **Gas Prices Relief Act (H.R. 6787/S. 3609)**, would suspend the current 18.4 cents-per-gallon federal gasoline tax until January 1, 2023.
  - Introduced in February 2022.
- The result of this gas tax holiday is an estimated loss of over \$20 billion from the Highway Trust Fund.
- Many of our states are already realizing the lost revenue from state gas tax holidays.
- The lost revenue will severely limit the transportation infrastructure projects – both planned and ongoing – which will limit the impact of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- No guarantee a gas tax holiday would lower gas prices for consumers because oil companies could still raise prices.

# Tax Priorities

## Increased Tax Incentive for Volunteer Drivers

- The **Volunteer Driver Tax Appreciation Act (H.R. 7432)** would increase the federal tax deduction mileage rate for the charitable use of an automobile (14 cents per mile) to the standard business mileage rate (58.5 cents per mile in 2022).
- Volunteer drivers help our community members gain access to critical services and necessities.
- Increasing gas prices, coupled with the pandemic, will continue to deter individuals from volunteering their time.
- The current rate of 14 cents/mile pales in comparison to the standard business mileage rate of 58.5 cents per mile.
- Increasing the reimbursement will help incentivize volunteers and appropriately reimburse them for their efforts.

Next Up after Tax Priorities.....

# VOLUNTEER FIRST RESPONDERS



**2022 Virtual Town Hall and Fly-In**

# Incentives for Volunteer First Responders

- The **Volunteer First Responder Housing Act (H.R. 4377/S. 2316)** would give volunteer emergency responders the opportunity to participate in *USDA's Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program* and *HUD's Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program* (currently only available to paid first responders, law enforcement officers, and teachers).
- The number of volunteer firefighters is declining drastically due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining these essential volunteers.
- Volunteer firefighters alone save communities of all sizes an estimated \$129 billion a year, and represent 71% of all firefighters in the U.S.
- Access to programs like these two from USDA and HUD serve as important recruitment and retention tools for local fire/EMS departments who are struggling to meet increased demand for their services.

Next Up after Support for Volunteer First Responders.....

# BROADBAND/CYBERSECURITY



**2022 Virtual Town Hall and Fly-In**

# Broadband/Cybersecurity

- The **Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility (E-Bridge) Act (S. 1695)** would provide rural communities with access to Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants to develop high-speed broadband.
- The bill removes hurdles for broadband projects. Specifically, it would:
  - Clarify that eligible recipients may include public-private partnerships.
  - Provide flexibility in the procurement process
  - Clarify that funds can be combined with other federal resources.
  - Provide flexibility on accounting for in-kinds methods to meet non-federal cost share.

# Broadband/Cybersecurity (Cont'd)

- **The Community Broadband Act (H.R. 1631/S. 1460)** would authorize local communities to build and maintain their own Internet infrastructure by prohibiting laws in states that ban or limit the ability of state, regional, and local governments to build broadband networks and provide Internet services.
- **The Support the Protecting Community Television Act (H.R. 6219/S. 3361)** would reverse the Federal Communication Commission's 2019 order requiring that cable-related, in-kind contributions be subjected to the statutory five percent franchise fee cap.

# Broadband/Cybersecurity (Cont'd)

- **The State and Local Government Cybersecurity Act (H.R. 5960)** would permit the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center (NCCIC) to provide state and local governments with access to improved security tools, policies and procedures, while also encouraging collaboration for the effective implementation of those resources, including joint cybersecurity exercises, and the promotion of cybersecurity education and awareness.

# QUESTIONS?

## Contact:

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