SESSION NOTES

SESSION NAME: NACo Coalition of Forested Counties Overview
DAY & TIME: October 19th, 11 AM

SPEAKER #1 NAME: Chris Marklund

MAJOR POINTS:

- PILT -
  - Price tag for PILT in FY17 ($480M) is significantly more than it was in FY16.
  - Appropriated bill that’s usually in the same bill as the NPS, EPA, and many other items fighting for the same slice of the pie.
  - Received strong bipartisan support and full funding recommendation.
  - From here, goal is to protect $480M and ensure that it stays put for PILT. Not a pot of funding that can be moved around to solve problems elsewhere.

- SRS –
  - Enjoys broad bipartisan support.
  - Do not want to go to 25% revenue sharing system – If that were the case Montana would see an 87% drop.
  - Like PILT, this is part of a commitment to the counties while national forests work on more productive management policies.
  - In previous years Congress waiting until the first quarter of the following year to reauthorize SRS. We know it’s not helpful because counties are trying to finalize budgets now. Impress on congress whenever possible that SRS needs to get done in December.

- Wildfire funding –
  - The fact that Congress has taken the formal step to identify a forest conference committee is encouraging and an excellent step. It’s always good news when they work together to identify their differences.

- Advocacy –
  - Have to know (1) landscape, (2) principles, and (3) your ask.
There’s a lot of uncertainty right now because of the political landscape.

Republican majority is expected to narrow; if that happens, freedom caucus will become more important in their ability to move things forward on the floor.

Forest management bill is a big issue – Congress wants to handle it before the end of the year but it’s a big bill with many complex issues.

Important to know who decision-makers are and how you might be able to talk with them about their positions.

Use resources such as Politico, High Country News, and other sources to help you learn the political landscape.

Congress – Know the committees they sit on and know their committees of jurisdiction. For forestry issues, don’t forget about appropriators and agricultural committees – they provide avenues to take care of bills. Know the biographies, histories, and staff of Congressional delegation as well. More importantly, make sure the staff know you.

Engage your members of congress to advocate for your priorities on the administration and congressional side. Also take the time to meet with the staff and build relationships with them.

What is your ask – How will it benefit your county? Who needs to make it happen? Why do you need it to happen? Make sure you can articulate an ask on a 1-page pieces of paper and that it’s actionable and has solid outcomes.

Fire Funding Issue – MACo sees great value in it. There are two main approaches: (1) putting it under FEMA [but downside is that there’s increased competition for funding]. (2) Budget cap adjustment [fancy way of putting it on the credit card – deficit spending to cover the costs].

Click on the link below to see MACo’s Election Analysis