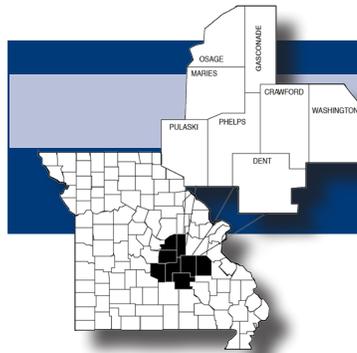


# FEDERAL PRIORITIES IN MISSOURI'S MERAMEC REGION



## 2015 CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES

THE MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD WISHES TO SHARE ITS PRIORITIES WITH YOU, OUR CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, THAT ARE OF INTEREST TO OUR ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE AND TO OUR INDIVIDUAL CITIES AND COUNTIES. THEY ARE:

### TRANSPORTATION:

- Encourage federal funding for improvements to Highways 63 and 50, which are identified as freight routes in the Missouri State Freight Plan, in the Meramec Region.
- Provide enhanced and sustainable funding for the nation's highway, aviation, prioritized freight routes and transit needs and find a means to fund the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Provide more federal assistance for public infrastructure—highways, bridges, locks, dams, sewer/water systems, WPA-type projects, etc. Many Missouri cities need to upgrade their infrastructure to meet ever changing requirements for their constituents and local businesses but do not have the needed tax dollars. We need more grant funding and federal and state support in this area. The increased economic development resulting from new infrastructure would provide additional money to improve other infrastructure.
- Make adjustments to Davis/Bacon Act that allow small, rural communities to waive prevailing wage requirements for projects under \$250,000.
- Fully fund the existing portfolio of federal community and economic development programs, most notably the Economic Development Administration's infrastructure and economic adjustment assistance and district planning grant programs, Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program and Small Business Administration business lending programs.

Specifically:

- Reauthorize and fully fund EDA and include provisions that (1) would ensure that planning grants will be increased if appropriations are increased, (2) would lower the local government cost share on grants and (3)

### *Members of the Meramec Region's Congressional Delegation:*

**THE HONORABLE SENS. ROY BLUNT  
AND CLAIRE MCCASKILL  
REPS. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, VICKI  
HARTZLER AND JASON SMITH**

The Meramec Regional Planning Commission, representing eight counties and their respective cities, is pleased to present its 2015 Federal Priorities agenda to you. In addition to our specific priorities, our board encourages fiscal responsibility and asks that Congress achieve a balanced budget. We encourage efforts that create jobs and offer grant funding for rural areas, like ours. We look forward to working with you, and we thank you in advance for your consideration of our 2015 Federal Priorities.

Sincerely,

T.R. Dudley  
MRPC Chairman

Bonnie J. Prigge  
Executive Director

would allow local control and ownership of Revolving Loan Funds once fully revolved.

- Fully fund USDA Rural Development grant programs for infrastructure improvements, business development, community facilities, housing and broadband services.
- Continue to promote Fort Leonard Wood using the results of the FLW Joint Land Use Study and Missouri's Military Infrastructure Report.

### HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICE:

- Repeal or correct non-working components of the Health Care Reform Act and keep provisions that work. As employers and local governments, we have concerns about the following:
  - The Comparative Effectiveness Fees and the creation of the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute, which will play a major role in determining what

healthcare procedures are necessary.

- The Modified Community Rating, where rates will be based on age, tobacco usage, geographic location and family tier with no consideration allowed for health status when pricing.
- The excise tax that became effective in 2014.
- The 40 percent excise tax to be accessed on “Cadillac” plans in 2018.
- MRPC supports full administrative funding for housing authorities. Housing assistance programs provide safe, modest, affordable housing for veterans, the disabled and the elderly. These programs help maintain quality housing by establishing and enforcing housing quality standards. The Housing Choice Voucher program administrative fee has been reduced over a decade and is currently at 79 percent of original funding with no reduction in administrative burden.
- MRPC supports the efforts to keep the General Leonard Wood Hospital open and operating as a key piece of health-care services for military retirees and the region as a whole. This includes fostering public-private partnerships.

#### **ENERGY:**

- Continue to oppose Cap and Trade legislation because of the burden of increased energy costs it would place on local governments and Missouri businesses and oppose allowing the EPA to administer and set regulations for carbon dioxide.
- Aggressively encourage construction and use of nuclear power plants with safe, economical disposal of spent fuel. In particular, continue to support research and development of small modular nuclear reactors.
- Continue to work toward energy independence. Encourage research of other crops to develop new sources of energy rather than using food products like corn and soybeans. Explore environmentally friendly ways to drill for oil and use them. Pursue oil shale while exploring solar, wind with biomass conversion energy, hydro-electric and expansion of nuclear energy production.

#### **HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:**

- Build upon the experience, capacity and skills of regional planning commissions to coordinate, plan and implement homeland security and emergency preparedness activities on a regional basis and allow local decision-making and promoting and encouraging potential grant opportunities through Housing and Urban Development to disburse

through RPCs for emergency preparedness and homeland security efforts.

- Ensure rural regions receive adequate resources and equitable access to the broad portfolio of homeland security and emergency preparedness programs, including first responder, pre-disaster mitigation and all hazards mitigation resources. In addition, fully fund FEMA’s flood map modernization and pre-disaster programs.
- Support for continued funding and expanded missions for Fort Leonard Wood.

#### **EDUCATION:**

- Support technical training initiatives such as the National Career Readiness Certificate program, MO Wins and MO Health Wins programs for our labor force.
- Encourage greater emphasis on reading, writing, math and science competency. Also encourage the emphasis of reading and writing as they relate to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).
- Encourage additional funding to assist students with federal grants and loans.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES:**

- Recalibrate EPA wastewater standards to reduce the fiscal impact to local governments and communities. The Clean Water Act requirements for wastewater treatment facilities are extremely difficult for small, rural communities to meet. If changes cannot be made in the regulations, these communities need additional assistance in meeting these requirements through technical assistance and grants.
- Preserve the current tax exemption for municipal bonds. Tax-exempt financing used by state and local governments is critical to sustain economic growth. Currently, the Senate Finance Committee is considering eliminating this resource as part of tax reform.
- Eliminate unfunded federal mandates to states or provide funding options and opportunities to states and local governments to fully fund them.
- Reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act and reinstate full funding of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program while increasing flexibility in how Title II and Title III funds can be used.



THE MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION . . . IS A VOLUNTARY COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SERVING THE MERAMEC AREA OF MISSOURI. THE MRPC AREA INCLUDES THE EIGHT COUNTIES OF CRAWFORD, DENT, GASCONADE, MARIES, OSAGE, PHELPS, PULASKI AND WASHINGTON AND THEIR RESPECTIVE CITIES. THE MISSION OF MRPC IS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE MERAMEC REGION.

#### **Meramec Regional Planning Commission**

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