



Coconino County Resource Advisory Committees (RAC)



Major reforms to the Resource Advisory Committees (RAC) process are needed to make the RAC more functional for local governments. We continue to support legislation that will improve the functionality of the RACs.

- **Coconino County asks that local context drive the reform effort of the RAC process in order to make the RAC more functional for local governments.**

- **Background:**
 - Coconino County is the second largest county in the contiguous United States in terms of size at 18,661 square miles. Larger than nine states, only San Bernardino County, California is larger. Comparatively, Coconino County has fewer than 140,000 residents; San Bernardino County has more than two million residents. San Bernardino's annual budget is \$5.8 billion; Coconino County's budget is \$188 million. Only 13 percent of land in Coconino County is private land.
 - The committee is authorized under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (the Act) and operates in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The purpose of the committee is to improve collaborative relationships and to provide advice and recommendations to the Forest Service concerning projects and funding consistent with the Act.
 - Finding qualified and diversified applicants who can also travel to sit on the RAC can be a difficult task when you have a huge land mass, minimal private land, and less than 140,000 residents. Given the rural nature of the county, the constraints with both budget and population base, alternatives to the current appointment process may be appropriate to consider to address this vital committee and its mission.

- **Key Issues:**
 - Major reforms to the Resource Advisory Committees (RAC) process are needed to make them more functional for local governments.
 - Coconino County supports Congressman O'Halleran's bill, H.R. 2898, which would amend the Secure Rural Schools Act. Representatives Gosar, Grijalva and Gallego have signed on as co-sponsors to H.R. 2898. In addition, Congressman Westerman, the lead Republican co-sponsor of the bill and a leading voice on forestry issues in Congress, has attached two of the three provisions from H.R. 2898 to the Resilient Forests Act H.R. 2936. H.R. 2936 has passed through the House and is being referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. NACo strongly supports the bill and issued a resolution in support of it backed by Supervisor Archuleta.



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- That measure includes important reforms to address the barriers faced by rural counties across the nation. Among its primary provisions are:
 - Establishment that a budgetary threshold (under \$1 million) that would exempt RACs from the term limit requirement calculation for that year to ease the recruitment process.
 - Allowing Regional Forester to establish local RACs, instead of the current system that requires Forest Service HQ to approve them to expedite the appointment process.
 - Reducing the size of the RAC from 15 to 9 or less to ease the quorum requirements. We continue to support legislation that will improve the functionality of the RACs.