



NSDA Digest – Week of October 26, 2026

40,000 Special Districts + One Voice

Federal Advocacy Highlights

Federal Advocacy Update: Year-End Priorities and the Road Ahead

The Federal Advocacy Committee met on October 22 to discuss the November midterm elections, to prepare for a critical period of federal advocacy focused on advancing special districts' priorities, build relationships with incoming congressional leaders, and shape legislation that affects local services and communities nationwide.

Advancing the Special District Fairness and Accessibility Act (SDFAA)

With the House floor vote still pending, NSDA and its federal advocacy team at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips are preparing a year-end strategy to sustain momentum for the **Special District Fairness and Accessibility Act (H.R. 2766 / S. 2014)**. The legislation has 27 bipartisan House cosponsors and four bipartisan Senate cosponsors. Given limited congressional floor time during the post-election lame-duck session, NSDA is preparing for advocacy to continue into the 120th Congress. Early November outreach will focus on bill champions, incoming House and Senate leaders, and members of the anticipated House Oversight and Government Reform Committee majority. NSDA will also prioritize educating newly elected members and their staff about special districts and the importance of equitable access to federal programs.

Reviewing Emerging Federal Legislation

NSDA continues to monitor and evaluate legislation with potential implications for special districts. Current priorities include:

- **Revitalize Rural America Act (H.R. 10508):** Provisions addressing rural grant-writing assistance, essential public-service employees, and rural workforce incentives.
- **Community Disaster Protection Act (H.R. 10686):** Proposed FEMA grants to help eligible entities, including special districts, develop community-based catastrophe insurance programs.
- **Fire Apparatus Advocacy:** Bipartisan congressional resolutions calling for a Federal Trade Commission investigation into consolidation and potential anticompetitive practices in the fire apparatus manufacturing industry.
- **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and water infrastructure reauthorization:** NSDA is monitoring negotiations affecting the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, important funding sources for special district infrastructure.

Through your Federal Advocacy Committee, NSDA reviews relevant legislation, gathers input from member associations, and determines when formal positions and advocacy actions are warranted.

Your Voice Matters: 2030 Census Comments Due November 2

NSDA is preparing comments on the Census Bureau's proposed 2030 Census rule. Census data influence special districts' infrastructure planning, service delivery, and eligibility for federal grants. Proposed changes to the seasonal counting window could shift population counts away from rural, resort, and agricultural communities. NSDA is urging the Census Bureau to ensure data accurately reflect where residents live, coordinate with federal agencies on funding eligibility thresholds, and engage special districts as the rule is finalized.

Grant Funding News and Highlights: Lot of grant opportunities are being released so make sure to keep an eye on our weekly notices! <https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/weekly-grants-updates-from-tfg>.

Department of Energy

FY 2026 Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project Community Technical Assistance

WHAT DOES IT FUND? The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance to communities in the United States and its territories for energy planning. The program offers two distinct technical support tracks: Strategic Energy Planning and Deep Dive technical assistance. During the application process, communities may select which track best meets their needs, and Regional Partners will advise on the track for which the community is best suited. [Click here](#) for more information.

WHO'S ELIGIBLE? Eligible applicants are local governments (e.g., municipality, county, city, town); Tribes or Tribal organizations; community-based organizations (including nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations); special purpose districts (e.g., school district, water district, sewer district); academic institutions; municipal utilities; and electric co-ops. The applicant community must be based in an ETIPP-supported region and must be on an island, in Alaska, or within 50 miles of a coastline (ocean or seacoast, or along the Great Lakes), have a population of fewer than 50,000, or be a federally recognized Tribe.

TOTAL FUNDING AMOUNT? Unspecified

WHEN IS IT DUE? November 18, 2026

Webinars:

Help Shape the 2027 NSDA Webinar Series by November 1, 2026 – By responding to this short survey, you will provide NSDA critical feedback for our 2027 planning. <https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/training-webinars-on-demand>

Last webinar of 2026! November 12 - Essential HR Tools for Smaller Districts with CPSHR
Register here: <https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/training-webinars-on-demand>

Smaller districts face unique workforce challenges. Learn practical HR tools and strategies to support recruitment, retention, compliance, and employee management — even with limited staff and resources.

District Highlight - NSDA Member Spotlight: Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts Demonstrate the Value of Flood Control

Historic rainfall across eastern Nebraska on September 30–October 1 put critical flood-control infrastructure to the test—and demonstrated how special districts help protect lives, property and communities. In the Omaha metro, 5–9 inches of rain fell overnight, while parts of the Salt Creek Watershed received more than 10 inches. Despite record river and creek levels, flood-control reservoirs, levees and other infrastructure operated as designed, helping reduce downstream flooding, erosion and potential damage.

Nebraska's 23 Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) have invested in flood protection for decades, working with local, state and federal partners to manage water and reduce risks. These investments continue, including new reservoirs and a \$19.7 million project to construct nine floodwater-reduction dams in the Wahoo Creek Watershed.



What makes Nebraska's NRDs unique? They are the only system of their kind in the nation, with boundaries based on major river basins rather than traditional political jurisdictions. Established in 1972, these local government entities have broad responsibilities for protecting Nebraska's natural resources, allowing them to address conservation, water management and flood-control needs at the watershed level. This historic rainfall underscores an essential message: special districts are on the front lines of protecting communities through critical infrastructure, long-term planning and local expertise.

<https://www.nacdnet.org/2026/10/20/more-than-70-years-of-conservation-little-indian-watershed-prepares-for-its-next-chapter/>

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD), an NSDA member and the trade association representing Nebraska's 23 NRDs, supports this important work.

Learn more at www.nrdnet.org.

Lets get Social - Follow like and repost NSDA - Help us reach a goal of having 10,000 followers!

- Districts Make the Difference: <https://www.facebook.com/LocalDistricts/>
- NSDA posts:
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [LinkedIn](#)
 - [X](#)
- Bluesky: [National Special Districts Association \(@nsdadistricts.bsky.social\) — Bluesky](https://www.youtube.com/@NSDAdistricts)
<https://www.youtube.com/@NSDAdistricts>

Quick Links That Matter

Do you have your Member Code to see all member only resources? If not contact your Association or Chantalu@nationalspecialdistrict.org. NSDA posts the real time updates on these links below. Please check out these pages weekly to get your news to share including the latest guides and grant releases from the Ferguson Group and the Advocacy "Recaps and Look Ahead" from Manatt.

- Federal Advocacy Updates → <https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/federal-advocacy-regular-updates>

- Advocacy News Alerts →
<https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/advocacy-news-alerts>
- Latest News and Events →
<https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/news-events>
- Grants Update →
<https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/weekly-grants-updates-from-tfg>
- Your Members-Only Events and Webinars →
<https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/training-webinars-on-demand>