

# First 100 Days of Trump Administration and 115th Congress

By Leslie Mazingo | *Strategics Consulting*

**After Franklin D. Roosevelt was sworn in as president in 1933 he accomplished so much during his first 100 days in office, presidential historians have said that the period soon became the common measurement by which all future presidents would be compared.** After the November 2016 elections gave one-party control of Congress and the White House to the GOP for the first time in 12 years, it was clear the first 100 days of a Trump Administration and the 115th Congress will be significant. The goals are big, the list is long and there is an eagerness to move quickly. Below are just a few of the issues expected to receive attention that could have an impact on North Carolina counties.

## FY17 Appropriations and the Debt Limit

During the lame-duck session after the elections, Congress passed another short-term Continuing Resolution to continue funding federal government agencies and programs at FY16 levels through April 28, 2017. Additionally, the current debt limit expires at the end of March. Battles over government spending and what the priorities are moving forward are going to heat up quickly and it could get painful. President Trump has nominated a lot of corporate executives to his cabinet who do not have government experience. They are used to

making hard decisions in the business world that are not typical of those worried about re-election, so assume at this point that everything with regard to government spending cuts is on the table.

Therefore, county officials must continuously advocate with your Members of Congress for the federal funding that supports programs important to your county.

## Federal Regulations

On his first day in office, President Trump has promised to issue sweeping executive orders that immediately undo many Obama Administration regulations. High on the list is the "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) rule. WOTUS is a term used in the Clean Water Act (CWA) to define what waters fall under federal jurisdiction versus those waters that fall under state authority. Waters (and their conveyances) that fall under federal jurisdiction require federal CWA permits for construction and maintenance projects. Almost immediately after the rule was finalized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, numerous lawsuits were filed by 31 states and private parties. Additionally, both chambers of Congress attempted to overturn the rule, but President Obama vetoed the legislation. The presidential election has changed the outlook on WOTUS. Mired in the courts, it was

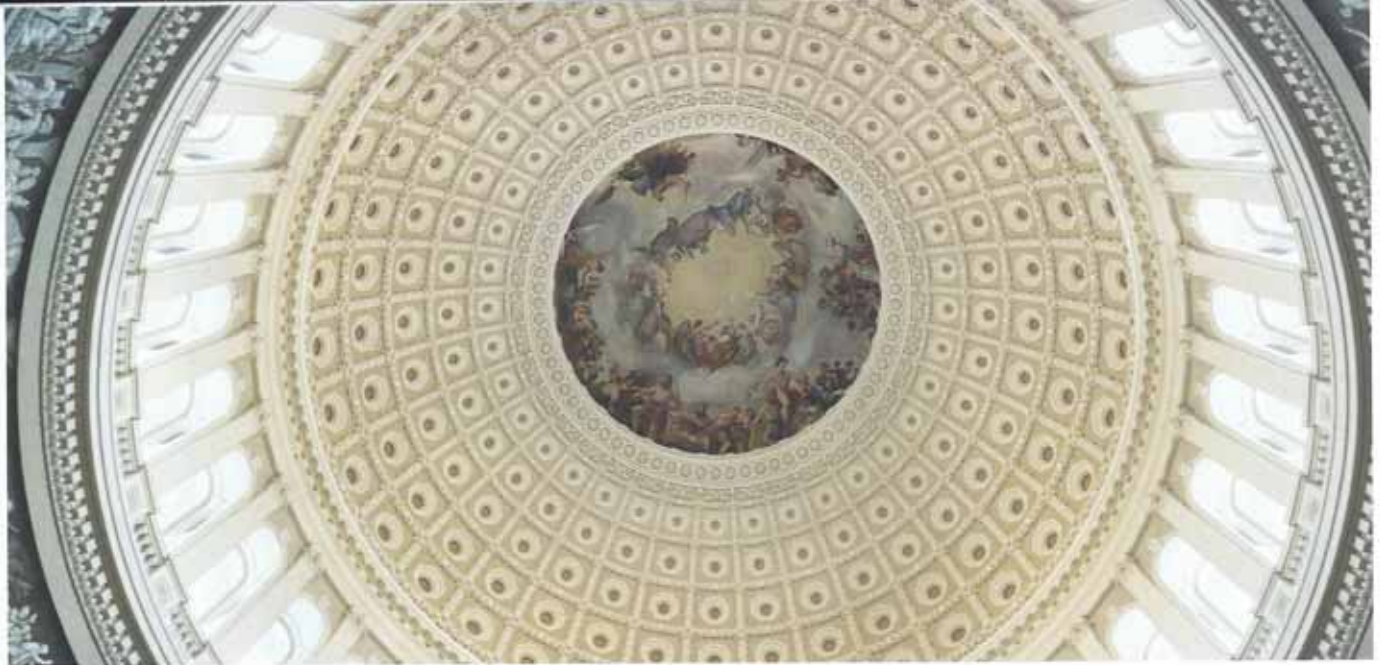


anticipated that WOTUS would not be resolved for years. However, President Trump has publicly said he will roll back the rule. Additionally, there are 2008 and 2015 Clean Air Act standards, which are just now being implemented and having a significant impact on many counties that could be re-evaluated.

### Tax Reform and Municipal Bonds

“A Better Way” (<http://abetterway.speaker.gov>) is the six-pillar agenda promoted by the House Republicans over the last year as their plans for addressing some of the nation’s biggest challenges. On February 4, 2016, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) announced the creation of six committee-led task forces charged with developing detailed policy recommendations and in June

2016 the Tax Reform Task Force led by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX) released a blueprint for the tax reform plan. The blueprint included simplification of the tax code and itemized reductions to the point it would fit on a postcard. President Trump also released a few elements of his tax plan during the campaign, including a provision that would limit the tax value of itemized deductions. Neither the House Republicans’ blueprint nor President Trump’s tax reform plan addresses how the exemption for municipal bond interest would be treated. Since 2010, however, various proposals for tax reform have included language that would either eliminate or cap the benefit of the exemption for municipal bond interests. Any changes to the exemption will increase costs for state and local



governments to finance new and existing projects, so North Carolina counties must remain vocal with their opposition to any attempts to change the existing tax exemption for municipal bonds.

Identify to your Members of Congress local public infrastructure that would not have been possible without municipal bonds and provide them with data on the financial burden that will be shifted to your county if Congress eliminates the exemption.

## Immigration Reform

Priorities for immigration reform differ substantially between the parties and even within the two parties. Immigration reform includes many different issue areas, including pathways to citizenship, border security, employment verification and work visas. North Carolina counties bear a heavy fiscal burden as a result of national immigration policies, so regardless of the differences, Members of Congress need to know what those costs are and

that the federal government should reimburse counties for the costs incurred in assisting legal immigrants, refugees, undocumented individuals and others.

## Economic Development and Trade

President Trump promised to create a growth economy with millions of new jobs in manufacturing, where American companies overseas would come back or otherwise pay hefty fines, and unfair trade agreements would be dismantled and reworked to put American workers first. Economic development is a key issue for North Carolina counties and many counties in the state are still struggling with high unemployment. Jobs are a priority.

County officials are encouraged to work closely with your federal officials to ensure they know what will best enhance the manufacturing sector in your county, promote county participation in the global economy, and insist that future free trade agreements

align with the economic base of North Carolina.

## Cybersecurity

President Trump may direct the U.S. Department of Justice to create a joint task force to coordinate federal, state, and local law enforcement responses to cyber threats. In addition to specific recommendations, more funding may be directed specifically for safeguarding entities with the best defense technologies tailored to likely threats. ■

*To read details of President Trump's campaign contract with America, outlining his 100-day plan, go to: [https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/\\_landings/contract/O-TRU-102316-Contractv02.pdf](https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/_landings/contract/O-TRU-102316-Contractv02.pdf). To follow the details of the Trump Transition, go to: <https://greatagain.gov/>.*

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