

June 28, 2022

MEMO TO: Alice L. Lee, Chair
Maui County Council

F R O M: Traci Fujita, Director ^{tntf}
Office of Council Services

SUBJECT: **2022 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, WESTERN INTERSTATE REGION CONFERENCE**

The purpose of this memo is to report on my attendance at the 2022 National Association of Counties, Western Interstate Region Conference, which took place in Anchorage, Alaska, May 18-20.

The conference program and information can be found on this website: <https://www.naco.org/events/2022-western-interstate-region-conference>. The General Session video can be accessed here: <https://vimeo.com/702090319/f8ccfc9ea6>.

Some resources that were highlighted during the conference:

- The Bipartisan Infrastructure law: <https://www.naco.org/resources/implementing-infrastructure-investments-county-level>
- State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Resource Hub: <https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/arpa-fiscal-recovery-fund>
- Toolkit for Counties: The 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <https://www.naco.org/resources/toolkit-counties-988-national-suicide-prevention-lifeline>
- Building Wildfire Resilience: A Land Use Toolbox for County Leaders: <https://www.naco.org/resources/building-wildfire-resilience>

A few take-aways from the conference:

Nationwide Market Insights

We are currently experiencing collision between moving away from Covid (overly successful with federal stimulus, consumer still happy) and international conflict. Affecting energy and food. Renewables will get there but not there yet. Historically, inflation spikes give way to sharp declines. Pharmaceuticals helping. Longest expansion in US history was housing. Where people can connect to infrastructure is where growth will be. Consumption never falls to bottom. Technology and communication are key. Patents are up. Productivity will help boost economy. War impact slowing down. War crimes may extend things. Look at business cycle. Profits benefit from inflation. Still bullish. This is a pause and correction. Stick with plan. Connect with employees.

Supporting and Investing in America's Tourism Economy

Perspective from Alaska is different from Hawaii. In Alaska, their main economy is the oil industry. They are trying to diversify their economy with tourism. Some ideas to control tourism impact: Permit lottery to reduce visitor impact on parks and other facilities and backpack tax on outdoor gear to help pay for conservation efforts.

Broadband Solutions and Practices in Hard-To-Build Regions: Resources for Rural Communities

Data drives broadband decisions. Start with a study and assessment of options. Rural areas in Alaska finally got internet access through an “information island” created using satellite (Low Earth Orbit or “LEO”). First time in country and expensive. They are using LEO while building fiber. Recommendation is to get fiber because it’s endlessly upgradeable, lasts 50 years, and cost effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend this conference. Please let me know if you have any questions.