



Breaking News: Special Districts Grant Accessibility Act Introduced

Good afternoon.

Thank you, again, for signing up to receive the Weekly Special Districts Download newsletter. Reaching out on a Wednesday to share some breaking news regarding a major federal policy initiative for the nation's special districts.

Bipartisan legislation was introduced Tuesday to define “special district” in federal law to enhance federal understanding of the nation’s special purpose governments and reduce barriers for special districts’ access to federally-sourced funding opportunities.

The *Special Districts Grant Accessibility Act*, [H.R. 7525](#), is sponsored by Congressman Pat Fallon, R-Texas, alongside Democratic co-lead Congresswoman Brittany Pettersen, D-Colo. The legislation is on a fast track with a markup scheduled in the House Oversight and Accountability Committee on Thursday.

This landmark legislation for the nation’s 35,000+ special districts defines “special district” based on the National Special Districts Coalition’s [proposed definition](#). H.R. 7525 slightly modifies the posed definition, but reads as follows:

“Special district” is defined as “a political subdivision of a State, with specified boundaries and significant budgetary autonomy or control, created by or pursuant to the laws of the State, for the purpose of performing limited and specific governmental or proprietary functions that distinguish it as a separate entity from the administrative structure from any other form of local government unit within a State.”

The definition is necessary to drive consistency in how federal agencies view local special district governments in development and implementation of rules and regulations. The goal is for consistent language that fosters special districts’ clear eligibility and access to applicable programs supporting local governments.

To satisfy that goal, the *Special Districts Grants Accessibility Act* would require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – which is the clearing house for rules, regulations, and actions of federal programming – to issue guidance clarifying how all federal agencies should consider special districts as units of local government. OMB would have six months to issue that guidance as a directive across federal agencies. Agencies would have one year to implement from the date

the guidance is issued. OMB would be required to report to Congress within two years of the bill becoming law with an evaluation of the special district guidance and its implementation.

If signed into law, the policy would be the catalyst for further work with federal agencies to ensure special districts are accurately recognized in the same fashion as other units of local governments

The bill – carefully crafted among congressional stakeholders, executive agencies, and the National Special Districts Coalition – is scheduled for markup during a Thursday, March 7, House Oversight and Accountability Committee business meeting. Watch live on the Committee's YouTube channel beginning at 10 a.m. ET.

We will have a full update on Friday for the regular newsletter.

Karr Advocacy Strategies is a proud advocate for the nation's special districts and supports the *Special Districts Grants Accessibility Act*. As this is a top policy priority for special districts, Karr Advocacy will work with special districts and organizations interested in engaging in federal advocacy to advance H.R. 7525 at no cost. Contact Cole Arreola-Karr at cole@karradvocacy.com for more information and inquiries.

Questions? Do not hesitate to reach out to Cole Arreola-Karr, Principal/Owner of Karr Advocacy Strategies, at cole@karradvocacy.com and visit www.karradvocacy.com for more special districts resources.