WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) has released a quick-reference report that highlights 17 emerging sustainability strategies and includes short case studies from America’s counties.

The report, “2012 Emerging Sustainability Strategies in America’s Counties,” identifies several new trends emerging in county sustainability. Most significantly, counties are interested in making progress but have little capacity for experimentation. Consequently, they are honing in on sustainability strategies that result in measurable efficiency and cost-savings. More often than not, the sustainability strategies being implemented in 2012 have the clearest paybacks and limited risks. “Expensive” and “complex” technologies are not necessarily needed to advance sustainability.

In addition, the research found that “sustainability” and “innovation” are defined differently across counties. Strategies need to be flexible and work across different communities.

Emerging strategies included in the report are related to energy management and technology, green purchasing, effective waste management, and community planning.

Counties highlighted in case studies include:

- Sonoma County, Calif. on electric vehicle infrastructure;
- Loudoun County, Va. on community-wide energy management;
- Southwestern Minnesota Counties on model wind ordinance;
- Charlotte/Mecklenburg County, N.C. on purchase of bio-based products;
- Santa Barbara County, Calif. on conversion technologies;
- Miami-Dade County, Fla. on environmental media buying;
- Washington, D.C. and Arlington County, Va. on bike-sharing programs;
- Anne Arundel County, Md. power purchase agreements;
- Collier County, Fla. on smart and connected facilities;
- Allegheny County, Pa. on energy and water conservation in county correctional facilities;
- Kent County, Del. on energy efficiency and renewable energy in county water facilities;
- Kane County, Ill. on implementation of the International Green Construction Code (IgCC);
- Placer County, Calif. on commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy [PACE] programs;
- Fairfax County, Va. on going green through information technology improvements;
- Montgomery County, Md., on building energy performance disclosure;

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• Sonoma County Water Agency, Calif. on community choice aggregation; and
• Montgomery County, Md. on plastic bag regulations and fees.

The guide was developed with guidance from NACo’s Green Government Advisory Board, which consists of 40 county and corporate leaders in the sustainability field. Advisory Board Chair Gregg Goslin, commissioner, Cook County, Ill., said, “We are pleased to provide this snapshot of emerging innovative and cost-efficient strategies to help counties go green and reduce the cost of running county government.”

The report is available in the Solutions Center/Get Information, Training, and Assistance/Green Government Initiative section of the NACo website at www.naco.org. Hard copies are available upon request. For more information about the NACo Green Government Initiative, contact Jared Lang 202.942.4224.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.