

Statutorily Required Federal Advisory Committees that Began Operations in FY2015

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Congress regularly establishes federal advisory committees—sometimes called task forces, panels, commissions, working groups, boards, councils, or conferences. Many of these committees are required to operate pursuant to the [Federal Advisory Committee Act](#) (FACA; [5 U.S.C. Appendix](#)), which seeks to make advisory committee operations more accessible and transparent. Federal advisory committees are one of only a few formalized mechanisms for private-sector citizens to participate in the executive branch's policymaking process. FACA committees are prohibited from creating policy or issuing regulations. Their role is to remain strictly advisory. For a list of the bills pending in the 114th Congress that seek to establish a federal advisory committee see CRS Report R44232, [Creating a Federal Advisory Committee in the Executive Branch](#), by Wendy Ginsberg.

Each year, [about 1,000 FACA committees operate governmentwide](#). In FY2015, 1,009 active federal advisory committees held 7,421 meetings and cost more than \$367 million to operate. These committees assist federal agencies by providing policy advice and recommendations on a wide range of issues, including [childhood vaccines](#), appropriate [uses of regional resources](#), and [community banking](#).

Congress, Presidents, and executive branch agencies establish and use federal advisory committees to gain expertise and policy advice from individuals outside the federal government. In FY2015, 42 *new* FACA committees were established, 20 of which were required by statute. In contrast, the President established 4 of the 42 new advisory committees and agencies established the other 18. In recent years, the number of *new* FACA [committees required to be established by statute](#) has ranged from 5 committees in FY2012 to 25 in FY2011.

Below, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) provides the list of the 20 federal advisory committees required by statute that began operations in FY2015. The Department of the Interior gained five new statutorily required federal advisory committees, the highest number of any federal agency. The Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture were both required to administer four new statutory federal advisory committees in FY2015. Six of the 20 newly established statutory committees were resource advisory councils, which generally [provide federal officials](#)

[advice](#) on [public land use](#).

The tables below include the name of the committee, its affiliated federal agency or department, and its statutory authority. In most cases, the table includes the authorizing language's *U.S. Code* citation. In some cases, when an advisory body's authority is not codified, the most recent statutory authority for the committee is provided.

Table 1. Federal Advisory Committees Required by Statute, FY2015

Committee Name	Statutory Authority ^a
Department of Defense	
Lake Eufaula Advisory Committee^b	Water Resources Development Act of 2007, P.L. 110-114 , §3133(b)(1)
National Commission on the Future of the Army	Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, P.L. 113-291 , §1702
Department of the Interior	
Coastal Oregon Resource Advisory Council	43 U.S.C. §1739
Northern California District Resource Advisory Council^c	43 U.S.C. §1739
Northwest Oregon Resource Advisory Committee	43 U.S.C. §1739
Southwest Oregon Resource Advisory Council	43 U.S.C. §1739
Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Advisory Council	Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, P.L. 113-291 , §3092(a)(6)
Department of Labor	
Advisory Board on Toxic Substances and Worker Health	Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense

Department of Agriculture

[Alabama Resource Advisory Committee](#) [16 U.S.C. §7125](#)

[Black Hills Resource Advisory Committee](#) [16 U.S.C. §7125](#)

[National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board](#) [7 U.S.C. §3123](#)

Department of Veterans Affairs

[Commission on Care](#) [38 U.S.C. §1701 note](#)

Source: Congressional Research Service analysis of the Federal Advisory Committee Act Database, at <http://facadatabase.gov/>.

Notes:

- a. Codification does not affect the duties or operations of a federal advisory committee.
- b. According to Department of Defense (DOD) officials, the eight-year gap between enactment of the committee's establishing authority and its operations was caused by a department freeze on the implementation of new advisory committees as well as internal DOD disagreements over the ethics designations of the committee's membership.
- c. According to Bureau of Labor Management officials, in FY2015, the Northeast California and Northwest California resource advisory councils (originally established in 1995) merged to become Northern California District Resource Advisory Council.
- d. According to National Institutes of Health officials, the committee had been statutorily required since 2000, and had been operating outside of FACA's requirements. A restructuring of the committee's membership in FY2015 prompted institute officials to determine the committee should operate pursuant to FACA.