

December 22, 2016

RE: WEEKLY UPDATE

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Dear Mayor:

This will be the last weekly recap letter for 2016. If anything urgent should emerge next week, we will advise through a Daily Advisory. The next recap letter should go out on Friday, January 6, 2017.

Happy Holidays!

I. State Policy Issues

a. Electronic Public Notices Stalls. May Be Reconsidered in 2017

“The Electronic Publication of Legal Notices Act,” ([A-4429/S-2855](#)) legislation to permit local governments to publish public notices on their own websites instead of paying for notices in print in their official newspapers, did not have sufficient support to advance on Monday, and was pulled from the agenda. Both the Governor and Speaker afterwards indicated that the initiative remains a priority and that it may be revisited early next year.

The League was joined in supporting this legislation by the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC), New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), and the New Jersey Conference of Mayors (NJCOM). Our coalition supports this permissive legislation, as it will provide local leaders with a tool to streamline an antiquated process and replace it with a more contemporary method for advertising legal notices that will save valuable taxpayer dollars.

As you likely know from news accounts, this particular legislation was considered simultaneously with separate legislation, on which this coalition did not comment, dealing with pay increases for legislative staff and allowing members of the Executive Branch to earn additional salary. Essentially, while the legislation regarding electronic notices may be again scheduled for consideration, the second bill regarding salary increases will not be considered going forward.

Contact: Michael Cerra, Assistant Executive Director, mcerra@njslom.com, 609-695-3481 x120;
Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, lbuckelew@njslom.org, 609-695-3481, ext. 112.

b. Legislation to Permit JIFs to Invest in Local Obligation Advances

On Monday, the Senate passed [S-2663](#) with a vote of 31-2, with Senators Codey and Gill voting “no”. This legislation would permit both local unit and board of education joint insurance funds (JIFs), to invest in bonds of any governmental entity established under State law, or of any federal agencies or government corporations with certain limits and prohibitions. It will also permit the local unit and board of education JIFs to amend their respective risk management plans to form joint cash management and investment programs.

The bill was amended in committee to place a safeguard on investments. The amendment permits JIFs’ to invest in bonds, notes, and other obligations issued by an agency or corporation of the federal government; or, a governmental entity established under the laws of this state, as long as the governmental entity is not in default upon any of its outstanding obligations. In addition, the bonds, notes, or other obligations must be purchased at fair market value, guaranteed as to interest and principal, and have a credit rating of A3 or higher by Moody’s Investor Services Inc., A- or higher by Standard & Poor’s Corporation, and A- or higher by Fitch Rating.

The League strongly supports the passage of S-2663, as it addresses the issues we raised in [Conference Resolution](#) 2016-09. JIFs have different cash flow needs than local government and boards of education and currently are very limited on how they can invest. S-2663 would permit JIFs to take a conservative approach while reducing expenses.

The bill’s companion, A-4234, awaits consideration by the Assembly Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, lbuckelew@njslom.org, 609- 695-3481, x112.

c. UEZ on Governor’s Desk

On Monday, the State Senate passed [A-4189/S-2670](#), a compromise bill that will extend, for two years, UEZ authorization in municipalities where the program is scheduled to sunset at the end of this year. (Those municipalities are Bridgeton, Camden, Newark, Plainfield and Trenton.) The vote in the Senate was 24-12. The Assembly, then, concurred on a vote of 56-15. The bill now heads to the Governor for his consideration.

Earlier this year, Governor Christie conditionally vetoed A-2576/S-1080, which would have extended UEZ designation for participating municipalities for another 10 years. With his conditional veto, the Governor asked instead, that the Legislature direct the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to conduct a study of the UEZ program “... which shall include, without limitation, an assessment of whether an alternative, location-based program to assist fiscally distressed municipalities is appropriate, and, if so, recommendations for the parameters of such a program ...”

Respecting the Governor's desire for a comprehensive analysis of the program, S-2670/A-4189 has been introduced as a compromise. The new legislation accepts the Governor's recommendation regarding a DCA study of the program and research into alternatives. However, the bill provides a two-year extension to the five UEZs that are set to expire at the end of this year.

Those incentives allow businesses to attract customers to, and create employment opportunities in, economically distressed municipalities. UEZ designation is a vital tool in the tool kit of local leaders, working to bring their communities back from decades of decline, caused by housing and transportation policy decisions over which they had no control.

In addition to creating employment opportunities for residents of these municipalities, participating businesses represent an important component of the tax base. The closing or the relocation of these businesses would result in increased burdens on the remaining taxpayers. Further, each of these municipalities host more than the average number of tax exempt properties; four are county seats and one of those four is also our State's Capital.

You can click [here](#) to email the Governor and ask him to sign the compromise legislation. Absent action on these bills, businesses in five municipalities will lose UEZ benefits at year's end.

Contacts: Jon Moran, Sr. Legislative Analyst, jmoran@jslom.org, 609-695-3481 x121, or Michael Cerra, Assistant Executive Director, mcerra@njslom.org, 609-695-3481 x120.

d. Uber Bill Advanced to Governor

[A-3695/S-2179](#), which would create a new class of taxis exempt from local oversight, was amended and approved by both Houses on Monday and now heads to the Governor. This proposal would create a new class of taxis, exempt from local oversight. Since 1917, in order to protect prospective passengers and the general public, and to preserve order, municipalities have been empowered by statute to license and regulate ride-for-hire businesses. The manner in which the service is dispatched and provided does not materially alter the responsibilities that local governments will bear. Further, enactment of this bill could motivate traditional taxi and limousine businesses to avoid local over-sight, by requiring prospective passengers to use smartphone technology to hail a ride. That, in turn, could make it more difficult for older residents and for the economically disadvantaged to access transportation alternatives. This legislation is opposed by the League.

Contact: Jon Moran, Sr. Legislative Analyst, jmoran@jslom.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

e. Calendar Year 2017 Budget Matters

Please [click here](#) for the League's December 21 background letter on calendar year 2017 (CY) budget matters.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, lbuckelew@njslom.org, 609- 695-3481, x112.

II. Federal Policy Issues

a. President Signs Cures Act: Information and Grant Funding Available to Fight Opioid Abuse

Last week, President Obama signed into law the 21st Century Cures Act ([H.R. 34](#)), bipartisan legislation that authorized \$1 billion of grant funding over the next two years to help communities combat the opioid crisis. For 2017, Congress appropriated \$500 million for the opioid grant program.

The National League of Cities (NLC) – representing municipalities in 49 States - has been at the forefront of efforts to combat the opioid crisis. Earlier this year, NLC and the National Association of Counties (NACo) launched the [City-County National Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic](#), which recently released the report, "[A Prescription for Action: Local Leadership in Ending the Opioid Crisis](#)." The report provides recommendations for how local officials should address the opioid crisis, and explores how municipalities and counties can strengthen collaboration with each other and state, federal, private-sector and non-profit partners. Click [here to view the report](#) and find additional resources.

Following the passage of H.R. 34, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)), the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), announced that the application period for the [FY 2017 State Targeted Response \(STR\) to the Opioid Crisis Grants](#) is now open. The Opioid STR program aims to address the opioid crisis by increasing access to treatment, reducing unmet treatment need, and reducing opioid overdose related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment and recovery activities for opioid use disorder. These grants will be awarded to states and territories via formula based on unmet need for opioid use disorder treatment and drug poisoning deaths.

To help municipalities interested in applying, NLC has answered a few top questions. Click [here](#) for more.

Contact: Jon Moran, Sr. Legislative Analyst, jmoran@jslom.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

b. New Drinking Water Infrastructure Remediation Act Sent to President

With [NLC's support](#), Congress passed the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act ([S. 612](#)). The WIIN Act passed both chambers with strong bipartisan support, 360-61 in the House and 78-21 in the Senate, and was sent to the President's desk for signature last week.

The bill includes the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) that authorizes \$9 billion for 31 flood protection, navigation, and ecosystem restoration projects under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The bill also includes provisions to address the ongoing drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan, and to help communities nationwide improve their water infrastructure. Specifically, the bill authorizes:

- \$100 million for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund for any state, such as Michigan, that receives an emergency declaration under the Stafford Act due to a public health threat from lead or other contaminants in a public drinking water supply system;
- \$20 million for WIFIA loan and loan guarantees for water infrastructure projects nationwide;
- \$50 million to support public health initiatives such as lead poisoning prevention, research and health assistance;
- \$300 million over 5 years for lead reduction projects in public water systems nationwide; \$100 million over 5 years for lead testing in schools and daycare centers nationwide over 5 years; and
- \$300 million over 5 years for water system improvements in small and disadvantaged communities nationwide.

The Continuing Resolution, which Congress also passed last week to fund the government through April 28, 2017, includes \$170 million in appropriation for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund program, WIFIA and public health initiatives.

Contact: Jon Moran, Sr. Legislative Analyst, jmoran@jslom.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

c. Please Ask Your Federal Representative to Protect Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds

Tax-exempt municipal bonds are an essential and irreplaceable tool, used by municipalities to finance the construction and maintenance of Main Street infrastructure. Tax-exempt municipal bonds finance nearly two-thirds of the nation's core infrastructure. Approximately \$1.7 trillion in infrastructure investment over the last decade was financed with tax-exempt municipal bonds.

Despite proven success as a financing tool that drives development, while saving local governments interest costs, tax-exempt municipal bonds could be capped, diminished or dismantled as a pay-for under federal tax reform. As Congress considers comprehensive tax reform during the next session, New Jersey municipalities must stand strong in defense of municipal bonds.

One way to ensure support for tax-exempt municipal bonds is to increase membership of the

Congressional Municipal-Finance Caucus. Founded in March 2016 by Representatives Randy Hultgren of Illinois and Dutch Ruppersberger of Maryland, the Caucus is fighting for local governments' ability to independently finance projects to keep their communities strong.

We need your help to grow the Caucus. [Click here to send a letter](#) to your member of Congress today urging them to join the Congressional Municipal-Finance Caucus and protect the tax exemption for municipal bonds. By becoming a member of the Caucus, your member of Congress can join our fight to protect municipal bonds.

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III. 101st Annual Conference Recap

a. Conference Mobile App Helps After the Conference

The NJLM Conference mobile app can continue to assist you in finding presenters and exhibitors you may need to contact after the Annual League Conference. The app can be downloaded from your device's app store, now through January 12 - search for "NJLM". You can keep a copy on your desktop or mobile phone to use all year long. And, to help us to continue enhancing your conference experience, please share your thoughts and suggestions on the app via the "Feedback" icon on the app menu. [Click here to learn more about the 2016 Conference app.](#) **b. Conference CEUs**

You can now download the certificates for the CEUs you've earned at the Annual League Conference. For full information and instructions visit <http://nj-njslom.civicplus.com/300/Conference>

IV. Annual League Survey

As 2016 comes to a close, the League would like to know what you thought about our services provided throughout the year. Please forward this email to your municipal staff, administration, elected and appointed officials so they can complete our short online survey.

The link for the survey is.

V. Order the 2016-2017 Primer for Elected Officials

Whether you are a veteran or newly elected mayor or councilmember, the Primer for Elected Officials provides the basic information needed to carry out the responsibility of governing. It contains an updated directory of services provided by the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, a guide to Titles 40 and 40A of the New Jersey Statutes Annotated, and an up-to-the minute listing of State Agencies and the legislative priorities for the upcoming year.

See our web page for an order form: <https://nj-njslom.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/259>. Alternatively, contact Suzanne Allen, at

(609) 695-3481, ext. 129 or via email at sallen@njslom.com. The investment for members is \$20.00 and for non-members, \$30.00. **It is a necessary guide! VI. Also of Interest**

a. Healthy Communities is One of the NJLM Focuses for 2017!

United Health Foundation has released a report which finds **great news** for the State. **New Jersey is the 9th healthiest state in the nation** – up from #11 last year. The full report can be found at the America's Health Rankings website. [Click here](#) for a detailed report!

b. Snow Removal & Disposal Policy

Severe weather season is quickly approaching and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is reminding municipalities of the State's policy for proper Snow Removal and Disposal.

Municipalities are reminded, before and after a storm, to clear any blockages caused by snow and debris from storm drain catch basins. These efforts are especially important to help prevent localized flooding that may result from melting snow and heavy rain. Please be sure to use appropriate precautions when attempting to clear any stormwater related infrastructure. The up-to-date policy can be found [here](#).

c. No Hate Town Hall

Join Kean University and the American Conference on Diversity for the No Hate Town Hall, an opportunity to engage in diversity and inclusion dialog related to current issues impacting people in New Jersey and across the nation, and encourage action by individuals and institutions to end hate and discrimination. The featured guest speaker is Southern Poverty Law Center Director of Outreach Lecia Brooks.

Kean University - STEM Building; 1075 Morris Ave., Union, NJ 07083 Thursday, January 12, 2017 4 - 6 p.m.

Free and open to the public, including diversity and inclusion leaders, professionals, local elected officials, and nonprofits.

This two-hour event will feature panel discussions with experts from business, higher education, media and the community, who will focus on productive ways to address the ongoing challenges of dealing with hate, bias and bigotry in our communities. Register to attend at <http://www.kean.edu/no-hate-town-hall>.

d. Healthy Town Award

Each year the Mayors Wellness Campaign awards a minimum of two "Healthy Town" awards, and two "Healthy Town to Watch" awards. Both awards are won through a highly competitive process, and assess health and wellness activities conducted in the past calendar year.

Submit your "Healthy Town" application to dlevine@njhcqi.org by **January 9, 2017**. For details see <http://www.njhcqi.org/initiative/mayors-wellness-campaign/mayors-wellness-healthytowns-2/>.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Darcy, CAE
Executive Director