

February 4, 2016

Re: NJLM 24th Annual Mayors' Legislative Day Recap

Dear Mayor:

Yesterday in Trenton, mayors from all around New Jersey gathered for the League's 24th Annual Mayors' Legislative Day. League President Joseph Tempesta, Mayor of West Caldwell, began the day by welcoming Lt. Governor Guadagno. The Lt. Governor highlighted the importance and need to work with the local businesses to continue economic growth. Lt. Governor Guadagno also noted that she was heading down to Cape May today to assist municipalities recovering from Jonas.

After the Lt. Governor spoke, League President Mayor Tempesta asked key Christie Administration leaders to discuss their priorities for the coming year. Department of Transportation (DOT) Acting Commissioner Richard Hammer spoke about need to reauthorize the State's Transportation Trust Fund. He emphasized the costs we all pay for inadequate maintenance of our roads, bridges and railways.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin focused on DEP's efforts to expedite reviews and to streamline processes, in order to assist municipalities in navigating DEP. He also discussed the Department's continuing response to Super Storm Sandy, including efforts to assist municipalities that were devastated.

Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Chuck Richman discussed the status of affordable housing, electronic submission of documents, new housing initiatives as well listed resources that the DCA has made available to help meet the needs of municipalities and of individuals impacted by Hurricane Sandy. He also discussed the Department's continuing efforts to develop reasonable Affordable Housing policies and procedures, again asking Mayors to urge their Legislators to address Fair Housing Act reforms. Commissioner Richman also brought Mayors up-to-date on the Department's efforts to address homelessness, particularly regarding initiative to end homelessness for veterans.

Board of Public Utilities (BPU) President Rick Mroz talked about the need to hold utilities accountable for unacceptable maintenance and timely repair of equipment, conduits and rights of way, and of the need to modernize utility operations.

This was followed by a lively legislative policy roundtable discussion, moderated by NJ Spotlight writer John Reitmeyer. The panel included Senate President Steve Sweeney, Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, Assembly Speaker Vince Prieto and Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick; These State-level leaders were joined by League Second Vice President, Mayor Jim Cassella of East Rutherford, and League Third Vice President, Mayor Colleen Mahr of Fanwood.

One topic that generated enthusiastic support from State Legislators and Mayors, alike, was the need to reinvigorate the Transportation Trust Fund and to supply a greater level of aid to local

governments. Also, agreement was expressed to end the State diversion of Energy Tax funding. Legislators stated their agreement that the Energy Taxes do belong in local coffers and their hope to begin to address the problem, soon.

The need to protect the integrity of local pension systems, to provide municipalities with predictability regarding affordable housing requirements and the need to promote economic recovery also received favorable comment. Of particular note was Senate President Sweeney's strongly worded assurance that he would not support comingling of local and State pension system assets.

The program also included the presentation of certificates to the new class of inductees into the League's Elected Officials' Hall of Fame. These dedicated men and women have completed at least two decades of service to their fellow citizens in elected local office.

Mayors' Legislative Day is an annual highlight of the League's continuous efforts to keep local elected officials informed on what's happening in the State Capital and how that can affect you and your constituents. We invite you get more involved in our intergovernmental affairs services. If you would like to serve on our Legislative Committee, which develops League responses to State public policy initiatives, or if you have any ideas on how we could improve this service, please contact me at 609-695-3481, ext. 116 or mdarcy@njslom.org or Mike Cerra, at 609-695-3481, ext. 120 or mcerra@njslom.org.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Darcy, CAE
Executive Director