

October 30, 2015

RE: Weekly Policy Update

I. Assembly Returns November 9: Bills on the Governor's Desk

II. Congress Passes Two-Year Budget and Three-Week Highway Trust Fund Extension

III. NEW for the Annual League Conference – Consulting Meetings replace the Consulting Period

IV. Survey on High School Youth Civic Engagement

Dear Mayor:

I. Assembly Returns November 9: Bills on the Governor's Desk

The General Assembly, which has not convened since June, is now scheduled to quorum on Monday, November 9. This now becomes the deadline for the Governor to act on dozens of bills which have been on his desk since June. Last Friday we summarized three bills of interest to local government. We now call your attention to several other bills, **supported by the League**, which await the Governor's action. We suggest that you contact the Governor's office either by phone to 609-292-6000 or you can send an email to the Governor's office by [clicking here](#) and ask that he sign these bills into law.

[A-1726](#), which amends "Flood Hazard Area Control Act" to require DEP to take certain actions concerning delineations of flood hazard areas and floodplains.

[A-2385](#), which authorizes rural electric cooperative and certain municipalities to establish municipal shared services authority. A-2385 would authorize three or more municipalities that operate retail electric distribution systems to establish a municipal shared services energy authority. Once established, the bill would authorize rural electric cooperatives to become a member of the authority.

[A-2579](#), commonly referred to as the NJ PACE bill, would authorize municipalities to facilitate private financing of water conservation, storm shelter construction, and flood and hurricane resistance projects through use of voluntary special assessments. A-2579 is a permissive expansion of an existing program which does not involve any public money, but rather provides for private investment to assist property owners in making needed property improvements.

[A-3807](#), which permits educational research and services corporations to act as lead procurement agencies for local units and publically supported educational institutions; permits Council of County Colleges to act as lead procurement agency for county colleges, unanimously passed the Senate and Assembly yesterday. The educational research and services corporations could act as the lead procurement for goods and services concerning educational technology systems and related services.

[A-4265](#), which permits municipal, county, regional police and fire forces to establish a five-year residency requirement for police officers and firefighters. A-4265 permits a municipality to establish a five year residency requirement for police officers and firefighters. Residency would have to begin within six months for the date the police officer or firefighter begins their official duties. The municipality could provide exceptions to the requirement for any police officer or member of the fire department who suffers injury, or a threat of injury to his person, family, or property, and is committed by another who acts with purpose to: (1) intimidate him because of his status as an officer or member of the fire department; (2) manipulate an investigation; or (3) otherwise influence him to violate his official duty.

Further, we again like to call your attention to the following bill, which the League strongly **opposes**. [A-947](#) which would require municipalities, counties and local authorities to release the names, upon request, of all parties who have received bid documents prior to the bid opening once three or more bid packets have been obtained.

The League is concerned that the release of the bidders' names prior to the receipt of bids could lead to collusion and bid rigging. We are also concerned with the benchmark of "three or more bids" before the release of the bidders' list. We believe that this arbitrary benchmark will lead to costly litigation. Our final concern is that the bill will require a municipality to create and maintain a record. For more on this bill, please [click here](#) and see Item IV.

Please contact the Governor's office at the contact information above and urge him to **VETO A947**. **Contact:** Lori Buckelew, lbuckelew@njslom.org or 609-695-3481 x112.

II. Congress Passes Two-Year Budget and Three-Week Highway Trust Fund Extension

This week in Washington, Congress was able to pass a two-year budget, which includes an increase in the debt ceiling, and which will be signed by the President. Among other things, the debt cap provision will push the next debate over future borrowing into 2017, taking it off the table until after next year's Presidential and Congressional elections.

However, no such compromise was reached between the House and the Senate on Transportation policy and funding. Consequently, yesterday President Obama signed into a law a bill that extends federal transportation funding, which had been set to expire last night and through November 20.

Leaders in both chambers have said this three-week extension will provide enough time for them to finish work on a long-sought multiyear highway funding bill. The Senate [passed](#) a six-year highway bill in July, but the measure only includes three years' worth of guaranteed funding. The House, meanwhile, has worked on a [six-year, \\$325 billion](#) transportation bill that similarly contains only three years of guaranteed funding. The House would cut off the nation's infrastructure spending in three years if Congress does not come up with a way to pay for the rest of the spending.

Speaker Ryan is expected to bring the multiyear highway bill up for a vote on the floor of the House next week, clearing the way for a conference between the chambers on infrastructure spending.

Lawmakers have been struggling for years to come up with a long-term extension of federal transportation funding that is normally financed by the 18.4-cents-per-gallon gas tax, which has not been increased since 1993. The federal government typically spends about \$50 billion on transportation projects, but the gas tax only brings in appropriately \$34 billion at its current rate.

The short-term highway bill also extends a December 31 deadline for railroads to install an automated train navigation system, known as positive train control, to the end of 2018. The extension had previously been attached to both the Senate and House's multiyear highway bills after railroads threatened to partially shut down many of the nation's railways. Congress has not passed a transportation funding bill lasting longer than two years since 2005.

Contact: Jon Moran, jmoran@njslom.org or 609-695-3481 x 121

III. NEW for the Annual League Conference – Consulting Meetings replace the Consulting Period

Adapting to the growing interest in utilizing technology and focusing on individualized opportunities, the League has creatively developed a new way of providing the traditional consulting opportunities during the Annual League Conference. For the first time, pre-scheduled “Consulting Meetings” will be available. A list of consultants’ contacts have been made available on the League’s website and in the printed Session Program, allowing conference attendees the opportunity to schedule face-to-face meetings with State program directors, and subject experts. Conference attendees are encouraged to set-up meetings with participating consultants before Conference week to occur at a mutually agreeable time during Conference week. Schedule your meetings at your convenience. The Convention Center lounges and food courts provide comfortable locations to hold these scheduled consulting meetings. Check the list of Consultants today and schedule a meeting for your time at the Annual League Conference.

IV. Survey on High School Youth Civic Engagement

We are seeking your help with gathering some information. The League of Municipalities is assisting in gathering information on high school youth civic engagement, voting, and related municipal initiatives. If you or an appropriate staff member can please complete the following survey at <http://nj-njslom.civicplus.com/340/League-of-Municipalities-Surveys>

by Monday, November 2, it will provide us with valuable direction.

The information obtained from the survey will help form a symposium produced by Rutgers Walter Rand Institute of Public Affairs. All mayors will be notified on the details of the symposium once they are finalized.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, lbuckelew@njslom.org or 609-695-3481 x112.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Darcy, CAE
Executive Director