

February 4, 2015

Re: 23rd Annual Mayors' Legislative Day Recap Dear

Mayor:

Today in Trenton, over 150 mayors from all around New Jersey gathered for the League's 23rd Annual Mayors' Legislative Day. Attendees were given a handout featuring detailed information on the League's Legislative priorities for this year. You can see a summary of those priorities on our website at <http://nj-njslom.civicplus.com/Archive.aspx?ADID=412>.

Legislative Day Photos

The meeting opened with League President Brian Wahler, Mayor of Piscataway Township, asking key Christie Administration leaders to outline their priorities for the coming year.

Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Jamie Fox spoke about need to reauthorize the State's Transportation Trust Fund and urged all mayors to talk to their constituents to help them to understand the imperative need for adequate funding. He emphasized the costs we all pay for inadequate maintenance of our roads, bridges and railways – noting that the last great investments in these facilities were made over 50 years ago. 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) Deputy Commissioner Chuck Richman 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. Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Commissioner Diane Solomon 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 award winning NJ 101.5 Statehouse reporter Kevin McArdle. The panel included Senate President Steve Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Vince Prieto, Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick, Assembly Transportation Committee Chair, Assemblyman John Wisniewski, Assembly Transportation Committee Member, Assemblywoman Betty Lou DeCroce, and State Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee Member, Senator Jennifer Beck. These State-level leaders were joined by League Second Vice President, Mayor Albert Kelly of Bridgeton, League Third Vice President, Mayor Jim Cassella of East Rutherford, League Past President, Mayor Tim McDonough of Hope Township, and League Board member, Mayor Susan Howard of Monmouth Beach.

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.

The program concluded with 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. 122 or bdressel@njslom.com or our Director of Governmental Relations, Mike Cerra, at 609-695-3481, ext. 120 or mcerra@njslom.com.
Very truly yours,

William G. Dressel, Jr.
Executive Director