

March 10, 2017

RE: WEEKLY UPDATE

- I. State Policy Issues
- II. 2017 League Salary Survey
- III. Also of Interest

Dear Mayor:

I. State Policy Issues

a. Bill S-3040, Transfers PFRS

Yesterday, the Senate Budget and Appropriation Committee released a bill that would transfer the management and governance of the Police and Fire Retirement System (PFRS) from the Division of Pensions and Benefits to a Board of Trustees comprised of 7 Labor and 5 management representatives. [For more on the bill, please click here.](#)

The League testified that it is not necessarily opposed to the concept of S-3040 that is the creation of an independent governance board for the PFRS comprised of Management and Labor, but we have serious reservations with the bill and oppose it in its current form. It is anticipated that the bill will be before the full Senate on Monday. Senate President Sweeney, who sponsors the bill along with Senate Republican Leader Kean, expressed appreciation for the League's comments and that further changes and amendments to the bill could be addressed in the Assembly. We anticipate an Assembly companion to be introduced next week.

We will continue to advise you of developments on this legislation.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Sr. Legislative Analyst, lbuckelew@njslom.org, 609-695-3481 x112.
Michael Cerra, Assistant Executive Director, mcerra@njslom.org, 609-695-3481 x120.

b. Senate Voting Session for Monday, March 13

The New Jersey State Senate will meet on Monday, March 13 and consider a number of bills of interest to local government. We would like to call your attention and ask for your assistance on these two bills; one which is opposed by the League and the second is supported.

[Please click here to TAKE ACTION and email your State Senator on the bills listed below.](#)

- [S-2788](#), which the League **OPPOSES**, intends to streamline requirements for applicants at the front end of the MLUL application process, while at the same time extending the timeframe for many approvals from three to five years. While there may be merit, in some circumstances, to a streamlined preliminary MLUL process, because of the extension of the approvals, it is vital to make sure the integrity of the process is upheld and Boards are given sufficient opportunity to safeguard the taxpayers' interests.

- S-2788 would supersede the municipal checklist at the preliminary stage. Even the language, which would explicitly permit use of the checklist at final approval, is insufficient. A one size-fits-all approach, even at the preliminary stage, does not take into account the diversity of planning and environmental issues that must be examined during the entirety of the approval process. Certain threshold environmental issues may be paramount in one municipality and a non-factor elsewhere.
 - Under this S-2788, revisions to approved plans of more than 10% would require amended preliminary approval. Thus, applicants could increase scope up to 10% between receiving preliminary approval and final approval without seeking amended preliminary approval.
 - The integrity of local discretion over the checklist is paramount to the planning process. The proposed legislation, and specifically the overriding of the checklist at the preliminary stage, may deprive the local technical professionals and Board members of the requisite information needed to adhere to new Federal and State requirements for resiliency and sustainability.
- [S-2212](#), is a bill which the League **SUPPORTS**. Specifically, this legislation would prohibit third parties from filing property tax appeals with respect to the property of others. Current law allows any entity or individual that pays property taxes to challenge the assessment or exempt status of any other property in the county, in addition to their own. S-2212 intends to reduce the number of costly tax appeals and bring certainty to local government finances, as local government representatives are best suited to challenge assessments or the exempt status of a property.
 - This common sense reform that will bring stability to municipalities, property taxpayers and property tax-exempt organizations. Many nonprofit organizations, including hospitals and institutions of higher education, enjoy a great relationship with their local municipalities, including financial agreements made voluntarily on behalf of the nonprofit to the town. More and more these organizations are entering into financial agreements with their towns that support municipal services and reduce local property taxes.
 - However, these agreements are at risk of being challenged and bottled up in the court system if legislation is not moved to protect these financial agreements. Protecting municipalities and nonprofit organizations from challenges to mutually beneficial agreements that are negotiated in good faith, is paramount to maintain cooperative relationships between these nonprofits and their towns.

We would appreciate your assistance.

II. 2017 League Salary Survey

The League is conducting its biannual compilation of wages and salaries paid to mayors, governing body members and other key administrative personnel, including police officials. We are writing to request your response to a survey to help us gather this data. In order to use the data that you so generously take the time to provide, we request your response no later than **April 12, 2017**.

You may find and complete the survey in 9 minutes by [clicking here](#). If you would prefer to print a copy of the survey to complete by hand, you may do so by [clicking here](#).

Contact: Taran B. Samhammer, Advertising Manager, tsamhammer@njslom.org, 609- 695-3481 x124.

III. Also of Interest

a. New Jersey State Forest Fire Seasonal Prescribed Burning Program is Under Way

Prescribed burns will take place through the end of March, conditions permitting. The New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry will provide as much notice as possible of prescribed burns through its Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/newjerseyforests. The public may also contact the State Forest Fire Service at 609-292-2977.

b. The League Annual Conference is on the 2016 Trade Show News Network List!

The League Annual Conference is on top 250 trade show list! Check out the list at: <http://www.tsnn.com/toplists-us>.

c. Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service

On this day, mayors and county officials will hold public events and use traditional and social media to highlight the value of national service to the nation's cities and counties. Last year, 3,539 elected officials representing more than 178 million Americans participated in the fourth-annual Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service. The initiative is being led by the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, Cities of Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service. To spotlight the impact of national service and thank those who serve, mayors and county officials will participate in the fifth-annual Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service on **April 4, 2017**. To register, [click here!](#)

Sincerely,

Michael J. Darcy, CAE
Executive Director