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## December 14, 2018

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**Municipal Clerks:** Please forward to Mayor, Governing Body, and Department Heads.

### I. State Issues

#### a. Update on Marijuana Legalization

As previously reported, in late November the Senate Budget and Appropriations and the Assembly Appropriations Committee voted out legislation to legalize the adult use of recreational marijuana. The amended bills now stand at the “2<sup>nd</sup> reading” and could be scheduled for a final floor vote. It appears that with the final voting sessions for each house scheduled on Monday, this issue will carry over into 2019. While the Governor, Senate President Sweeney, and Assembly Speaker Coughlin all publicly support legalization, there remains distance between the Legislative Leaders and the Governor’s office on specifics of the bill.

For more, please see our letter from [Tuesday, November 27](#).

**For a copy of the presentation at the League’s informational webinar on this legislation, please follow this link for a [PDF copy of that presentation](#).**

For more on this issue, please see the following links:

N.J. mayors want higher taxes on marijuana. They are pushing a hard bargain:  
<https://www.nj.com/business/2018/12/nj-mayors-want-higher-taxes-on-marijuana-they-are->

[pushing-a-hard-bargain.html](#)

N.J. lawmakers won't vote on legal weed this year:

<https://www.nj.com/marijuana/2018/12/nj-lawmakers-wont-vote-on-legal-weed-this-year.html>

Expungement debate threatens to hold up marijuana legalization:

<https://t.co/Ku2hslaNhO?amp=1>

**Contact:** Michael F. Cerra, Assistant Executive Director, [mcerra@njslom.org](mailto:mcerra@njslom.org), 609-695-3481 x120.

## **b. Assembly to Vote on Bill Giving Control of Vegetation Management in ROW to Electric Utilities**

On Monday (December 17, 2018), the Assembly is scheduled to vote on [A-2558](#), known as the, "Vegetation Management Response Act." A-2558 would provide electric utility companies completely unfettered authority to clear, move, cut, or destroy any dangerous vegetation. While we appreciate the sponsors' intentions and amendments, which now require notice of vegetation management work be made to municipal governments and property owners, the League remains opposed to this bill.

The approach taken in this legislation is unnecessarily broad and overreaching, and removes local governments' ability to plan and manage vegetation in the right-of-way. While A-2558 seemingly limits what vegetation a public utility can address to only "dangerous vegetation," that term is unnecessarily broad to the point of near total inclusion of all vegetation.

As defined within the bill, "dangerous vegetation" would include any "vegetation growing in, near, or adjacent to the electric public utility's right of way, and the electric distribution and transmission system...which may fall into, touch, affect, or otherwise interfere with an electrical distribution line." This would seemingly include any vegetation on either public or private property and gives public utilities sole discretion to determine what meets the criteria of "dangerous vegetation." The utility is also under no requirement to receive any input from the public before the utility can unilaterally choose to clear, move, cut, and destroy to remove or replace the vegetation.

We need your assistance to ensure that state legislators hear the concerns of municipal leaders. We are asking that you please contact your state representatives to voice your concerns with allowing electric utilities to have total control of the vegetation in your municipal rights-of-way. Your legislator's contact information can be found using the [state's website](#) which breaks this information down by municipality.

**Contact:** Frank Marshall, Esq., League Staff Attorney, [FMarshall@njslom.org](mailto:FMarshall@njslom.org), 609-695-3481 x137.

## **II. Federal Issue**

### **a. GSA Survey Seeks Local Government Input to Assist With Identifying**

## **Broadband Assets**

As part of the MOBILE NOW Act, passed earlier this year, the Federal General Service Administration (GSA) has been tasked with providing a report and recommendations to Congress on how to best encourage voluntary state and local government participation in gathering data on possible locations for broadband infrastructure. This data will then be shared with telecommunications companies in order to help facilitate the expansion of broadband deployment.

The goal of the GSA report is to identify what incentives would be most appealing for state and local governments to voluntarily submit data on what assets they own that could be used to host broadband infrastructure, and how that information might be incorporated into a database. To help with the report the GSA has requested feedback from state and local governments through an online survey, geared to identifying what benefits and challenges there are with such data gathering and submission. Some information the survey seeks to gather is what kinds of data do state and local governments maintain about their own property and what concerns they have about sharing that data with others.

You can complete the voluntary [survey at the GSA website](#) or contact Jennie Campbell, Office of Government-wide Policy at 202-694-8131 or [jennie.campbell@gsa.gov](mailto:jennie.campbell@gsa.gov). Today (December 14, 2018) is the last day to complete the voluntary survey.

**Contact:** Frank Marshall, Esq., League Staff Attorney, [FMarshall@njslom.org](mailto:FMarshall@njslom.org), 609-695-3481 x137.

## **III. League Conference Follow Up**

### **a. Do Not Forget to Claim Your CEU's from the 2018 NJLM Annual Conference!**

Attention Municipal Officials! Do Not Forget to Claim Your CEU's from the 2018 NJLM Annual Conference! Please go to [our website](#) to claim your credits.

### **b. The Conference App is Still Available!**

*Misplaced your printed Session or Exhibitor Program Guide?* The app can still be [downloaded](#) in your app store to reference session details or view contact information for participating consultants and exhibitors. The app will be available for download through the end of this calendar year and remains available for accessing on your device as long as it is installed.

### **c. Exhibits at the Annual Conference**

Don't forget to follow up with the exhibitors you met during the Annual Conference! They're available to answer your questions and provide solutions to your town's issues. The full listing with contact information is available in the [Exhibitor's Program](#), on the [interactive floor plan](#) and the [conference app](#).

## IV. Also of Interest

### a. League Annual Survey

As 2018 comes to a close, we here at 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](#).

### b. Calling all Mayors! 1st Annual NJ Local Government Week

**Celebrate your municipality and showcase its beauty!** Let residents know about your municipal facilities and careers, and highlight the services that their local government provides on a daily basis by participating in NJ Local Government Week April 7-13, 2019.

The League invites you to join in with municipalities across the Garden State April 7-13, 2019, to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government. Through NJ Local Government Week, the League hopes to bring awareness to the role local government plays in achieving the best life for communities. Invite your schools, civic groups, businesses, and media to NJ Local Government Week activities for citizens of all ages.

**How Can You Celebrate?** Visit the League's website for ideas on celebrating in your municipality; including a "how to" packet with ideas ranging from basic, no cost activities to some that are more complex. Be sure to tag your social media posts with #njlocalgovt, and utilize the NJ Local Government Week logo that the League has provided by downloading from the League website.

[Visit the League website for tips](#), suggestions and a logo created to help promote your events.

### c. Reminder - New Jersey Future

[New Jersey Future](#) has launched a new interactive online tool for helping communities implement successful green infrastructure projects. The [Green Infrastructure Municipal Toolkit](#) is a one-stop resource full of information about planning, implementing, and sustaining green infrastructure to manage stormwater. It also contains direct links to Sustainable Jersey's green infrastructure actions, which can earn up to 20 points each. The [Green Infrastructure Municipal Toolkit](#) is perfect for community leaders who want to manage stormwater sustainably, reduce localized flooding, and improve water quality. Get started today at <https://gitookit.njfuture.org>. #NJGIToolkit

### d. Attorney General 21/21 Community Policing

The Attorney General has asked the 21 County Prosecutors to organize quarterly public events to discuss issues relevant to community policing in the 21st century.

The Attorney General has asked the [21 County Prosecutors](#) to organize quarterly public events to discuss issues relevant to community policing in the 21st century (the "21/21 Community Policing Project"). The goal of the project is to strengthen relationships

between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve – and to address areas of concern before conflicts arise. Starting in spring 2018, each of the County Prosecutors will be responsible for organizing one meeting each on the following topics:

- Spring 2018 (Apr-Jun) – Investigations of Officer-Involved Shootings
- Summer 2018 (Jun-Aug) – Opioids
- Fall 2018 (Sep-Nov) – Immigration Enforcement
- Winter 2018-19 (Dec-Feb) – Bias Crimes

The events will include presentations and/or discussions on the quarterly topic. For a listing of scheduled public events contact [your county prosecutor](#) or visit the [21/21 Community Policing Project site](#).

### **e. Application Period Now Open for Governor Murphy’s “We Value Our Veterans” Community Award**

Many municipalities already recognize veterans in numerous ways. This award provides an additional avenue to honor New Jerseyans who have answered the call to arms in the defense of American values. Through this program, municipalities must accumulate 145 points based on specific criteria in order to qualify for the “We Value Our Veterans” community award. Points towards the designation are awarded in many ways, from providing parking spots for Purple Heart recipients and disabled Veterans, to holding Veteran Service Organization Meet and Greets. The application is online at the [Department of Military and Veterans Affairs website](#).

For questions contact the Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs, Office of Government Relations 609-530-6893.

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