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May 10, 2019

- I. State Issues
- II. Federal Issues
- III. Also of Interest

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

I. State Issues

a. Governor Announces Accelerated DOT Municipal Aid Grant Cycle and Resource Center

On Thursday, Governor Murphy announced an accelerated NJDOT Municipal Aid grant cycle and the creation of a Local Aid Resource Center. Starting with SFY20, NJDOT will be modifying the application scheduled **accepting grant applications beginning this May 13 through July 19**, with the intent to announce new grant recipients in November. This applies to the \$151.25 million Municipal Aid grant program with an additional \$10 million for Urban Aid, as well as to the Bikeways, Safe Streets to Transit, and Transit Village grant programs – each of which has \$1 million available to local communities. This accelerate calendar should assist calendar year municipalities by working lining up the state calendar with the municipalities calendar year budget.

The new [Local Aid Resource Center](#) will provide one-stop shopping for local government managers by providing hands-on resources for the application process, raising awareness of grant cycles, and proactively communicating pertinent information. The Resource Center will provide training for submitting applications, assist local governments in preparing and submitting documents to meet state and federal requirements, and help identify issues and develop solutions to ensure municipalities receive support well in advance.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x112.

b. Governor Signs League Supported ‘Vicious Dog’ Standards Bill

On Tuesday, Governor Phil Murphy signed [S-1923](#) into law (P.L. 2019, Chapter 82). The League supported this carefully crafted bill, which refines the criteria, to be used by a municipal court, to determine whether a dog is vicious or potentially dangerous.

That bill’s provisions will allow local authorities to effectively ensure public safety, and permit the municipal court sufficient discretion in dealing with aggressive canine behaviors that may have been provoked by other actors.

During its course through the Legislature, the League successfully opposed an amendment proposal, which would have required a municipality to present a veterinarian’s recommendation that a dog be declared vicious, before a court could so rule.

Given the objective standards spelled out in S-1923, we questioned the utility of, and the added expense that would have been involved in, obtaining certification from a licensed veterinarian. Further, given the ‘clear and convincing evidence’ standard that the municipality must meet, we saw no need for the mandate, which would have increased the likelihood that conflicting ‘expert’ testimony which could have been presented to the court.

We appreciate the sponsors’ rejection of that amendment and we thank the Governor for his endorsement of the bill.

Contact: Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, jmoran@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

II. Federal Issues

a. Infrastructure Week and H.R. 2088

Please reach out and ask your House Representative to support and cosponsor H.R. 2088, legislation authored by former Phoenix Mayor and Congressman Greg Stanton (AZ) and Congressman Marc Veasey (TX) to reauthorize the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG) at \$3.5 billion annually over the next five fiscal years.

Next week is “**Infrastructure Week**” where local leaders will be calling attention to the need to invest more in our nation’s infrastructure. EECBG will help fund this critical need.

We call our attention to the [Dear Colleague Letter](#) circulated by Congressmen Stanton and Veasey asking their House colleagues to cosponsor [H.R. 2088](#), the EECBG renewal legislation. We suggest contacting your House Members, sharing the “Dear Colleague Letter and for his/her support and to sign on as a cosponsor.

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b. House Adds NFIP Extension to the Disaster Assistance Bill

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b. House Adds NFIP Extension to the Disaster Assistance Bill

On April 9, a new \$17.2 billion disaster aid package was introduced in the House of Representatives. That bill, [H.R. 2157](#), is scheduled for consideration this week. However, the Senate is still debating how much additional assistance Puerto Rico should receive. The impasse in the Senate is holding up billions of dollars in disaster aid to cities, towns and villages impacted by hurricanes, floods, wildland fires, and other disasters since December. Senate Republicans latest offer includes an additional \$300 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding for Puerto Rico.

The National League of Cities (NLC) is urging Congress to quickly pass the stalled disaster aid package, which is essential to help the cities, towns and villages that were devastated by natural disasters in 2018 and 2019 recover quickly, mitigate future risks, and improve local infrastructure to better withstand extreme weather in the long-term.

The House bill also includes language that would extend the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through September 30. The NFIP is set to expire at the end of May. Once again, a four-month extension is necessary because the House and Senate have been unable to finalize legislation that would provide a long-term (five-year) reauthorization of the program. The previous law that reauthorized the program for five-years expired in September 2017.

NLC is concerned that there is still considerable uncertainty about the fate of the NFIP and how the proposed reforms will impact flood insurance rates for primary, non-primary, and business properties. As Congress continues to consider these reforms to the NFIP, NLC is working to ensure the legislation protects the grandfathering of flood insurance rates, keeps flood insurance rates affordable, provides incentives to retrofit existing structures, and requires FEMA to utilize the best technology and methods available to improve the mapping process.

See what the [House supplement disaster aid package](#) provides.

Contact: Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, jmoran@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

c. League Supports Bipartisan Transportation Alternatives Bill

The NJ League and the National League of Cities (NLC) support the *Transportation Alternatives Enhancements Act* (**S. 1098**) introduced by Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Roger Wicker (R-MS). This bipartisan bill improves on the highly successful **Transportation Alternatives Program** (TAP), the primary federal funding program for bikeways and sidewalks to reduce traffic congestion, provide children with safe routes to school, and give communities more affordable transportation options. **S.1098** also energizes the TAP program with common sense reforms: TAP will be able to grow if transportation investment grows, it improves local control to complete projects, and it provides communities with access to project support by both their state and non-profits.

As Congress moves to reauthorize the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act* transportation bill this year, we support strong increases to multimodal and collaborative programs like TAP, which provided \$850 million to recipients in 2019. To keep reading and find out more about what this bill means for your community, view NLC's *CitiesSpeak* [blog](#) on.

Contact: Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, jmoran@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

III. Also of Interest

a. Register Now for the One Day Mini Conference

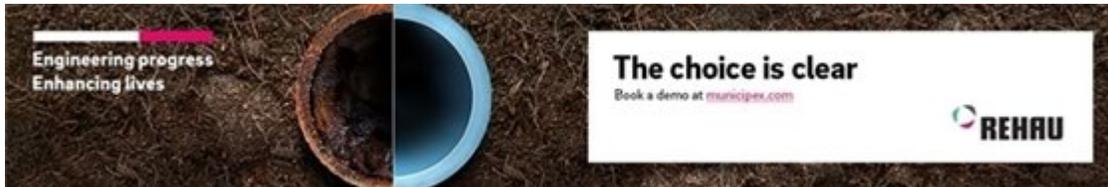
Friday, June 14, 2019
7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Conference Center at Mercer
1200 Old Trenton Road
West Windsor, NJ 08550

For more information on the Mini Conference including Registration and Credit Details please visit the [Mini Conference Website](#).

b. League Publications: Read All About It

The League offers a wide variety of publications to provide extra insights on the hot topics in local government, from Newly Elected guidebooks to the latest editions on OPMA, License Fees, Salaries, and Local Public Contracts. For more information on the full publication list or to order volumes for your reference, see the [Publication Order Form](#).

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New Jersey State League of Municipalities

222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
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