



Mayor Bill Chegwidan,
League President

President's Note:

At the end of February, Gov. Murphy proposed a \$55.9 billion State Fiscal Year 2025

[\[https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240227/2e/bf/bf/a2/e8a308485fac85e274171a58/FY2025_Final_BIB.pdf\]](https://d31hzlhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20240227/2e/bf/bf/a2/e8a308485fac85e274171a58/FY2025_Final_BIB.pdf) budget highlighting the state's

infrastructure in education, property tax relief, public transportation, and fiscal discipline.

Allocating \$1.635 billion, municipal funding has a proposed reduction of \$134.3 million from FY2024

but continues to support initiatives like the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) and the School Regionalization Efficiency Program (SREP). Energy Tax Receipts are projected at \$805 million, and the budget does not include the \$150 million in Municipal Relief Aid received in FY24.

The proposed budget also allocates \$10 million to incentivize municipalities to create new Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs); \$15 million to aid rental assistance beneficiaries towards homeownership and supports non-profits in home rehabilitation; and \$32 million for Down Payment Assistance. Also proposed: More than \$3.5 billion in direct property tax relief through the ANCHOR program and school funding; fully funded school aid; and \$7.1 billion pension payment, representing a full pension payment for the fourth year in a row.

Mayors around the state have an opportunity to testify at budget hearings. If you're heading to a public hearing, please [email Executive Director Mike Cerra \[mailto:mcerra@njlm.org\]](mailto:mcerra@njlm.org) to let him know.

The League has also been in high gear following Affordable Housing legislation and advocating for municipal governments' clear processes and fair treatment in the fourth round, set to begin in 2025. A number of amendments have been added to current bills, which represent good faith and responsive engagement and leave us optimistic that remaining matters for the successful implementation of this bill and the envisioned path forward will be resolved.

But the work isn't finished yet, on Monday, March 11, Senate and Assembly Committees are hearing important bills that will impact municipalities, including OPRA Reform, TTF Funding, and Affordable Housing. It's important to contact reach out to the members of the [Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee \[https://www.njlm.org/DocumentCenter/View/11008/SBA-Committee-Members-2024-2025\]](https://www.njlm.org/DocumentCenter/View/11008/SBA-Committee-Members-2024-2025) and the [Assembly State & Local Government Committee \[https://www.njlm.org/DocumentCenter/View/11007/ASL-Members-2024-2025\]](https://www.njlm.org/DocumentCenter/View/11007/ASL-Members-2024-2025) for the OPRA bill and make your voice heard on these important matters.

Action List: March

1. **[Comment on New Jersey Statewide Water Supply Plan.](#)** The Draft 2024 New Jersey Statewide Water Supply Plan was recently released for public comment with the 60-day comment period ending on April 26, 2024. An in-person meeting will be held on March 15 at 10 a.m. at the DEP Public Hearing Room, 401 E. State St. in Trenton. A virtual meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on April 9. Provide written feedback via the form on [the DEP's comments page.](#)
2. **[Track Affordable Housing Legislation.](#)** The League has been working with the sponsors of the affordable housing legislation and our membership to address local government concerns. We continue working with the sponsors to address methodology, available data sets, ambiguities regarding municipal responsibility, and other issues of concern. Both A-4, which passed the Assembly last month and [S-50](#) will be considered by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on Monday, March 11. Further amendments are anticipated but are not yet available.
3. **[Follow the TTF Reauthorization.](#)** The Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee favorably released [A-4011](#) on Thursday, March 7. This bill reauthorizes the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) for five years with an increase of 1.9 cents per gallon each year, as well as the creation of an annual \$250 registration fee for zero-emission vehicles that increases an additional \$10 each year for the duration of this legislation. S-2931, the Senate counterpart, is scheduled to be considered on March 11 in the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. The League testified in support of the bill.
4. **[Follow OPRA Reform Bill Hearings.](#)** On March 11, the Assembly State and Local Government Committee is scheduled to consider [A-4045](#), and the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee is scheduled to consider S-2930. It is urgent that the Senators on the [Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee](#) and the members of the [Assembly State and Local Government Committee](#) hear from you today that you share your strong support for OPRA reform. These identical bills make various reforms to the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) that address many of the issues municipalities have been experiencing since the inception of OPRA.
5. **[Attend Model Tree Removal and Replacement Ordinance Webinars.](#)** [<https://www.njlm.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=29111>] The NJ Shade Tree Federation, promoted in partnership with the NJ Association of Planning & Zoning Administrators, is offering a three-session webinar series, March 5 and 19 and April 9, covering the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) model tree removal and replacement ordinance. [Advance registration](#) [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9yB29aBeTzybBB4dSn9KIg?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery#/registration] is required.
6. **[Finalize Your Local Government Week Planning.](#)** The 2024 NJ Local Government Week will be held April 7-13. We invite you to join in with municipalities across the Garden State to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government. Be sure to share your municipality's activities on social media, and don't forget to use the hashtag #NJLocalGovt. For more information, visit the [NJ Local Government Week webpage.](#)

League News: Trenton Visits

The League hosted Mayors, along with state and local officials and friends of the League, to a reception prior to the Governor's 2025 Budget Address in February.



DCA Acting Commissioner Jacquelyn Suarez and NJLM Past Pres. Bridgeton Mayor Al Kelly speak at a reception at the League HQ prior to the Budget Address



Gov. Phil Murphy makes his Budget Address to the Legislature in Trenton flanked by Assembly Speaker Coughlin and Senate President Scutari.



Left to right in a row, Past President Woodbine Mayor William Pikolycky, League President Wharton Mayor William Chegwiddden, and Past President Clinton Town Mayor Janice Kovach, with Executive Board Member East Brunswick Mayor Brad Cohen at the League's Pre-Budget Address Reception.

Legislative Highlights

TTF Reauthorization Bill progressing.

[<https://www.njlm.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2914>] Assemblyman Clinton Calabrese introduced A-4011

[https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A4500/4011_11.PDF], and Senate President Nicholas Scutari and Senate Budget Committee Chair Senator Paul Sarlo will sponsor the bill in the Senate, which reauthorizes the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund Authority (TTFA) and makes several revisions, including an increase in the gas tax rate and the establishment of a fee for zero-emission vehicles. The recently introduced bill was favorably released from the Assembly Transportation Committee on Thursday, March 7. A-4011 would reauthorize the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF), create a new procedure for determining the Petroleum Products Gross Receipt Tax Rate (PPGRT), eliminate the PPGRT Review Council, and create a fee for zero-emission vehicles.

Update: Affordable Housing Legislation.

[<https://www.njlm.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2913>] The legislature is moving on bills that would overhaul the state's affordable housing laws. The Assembly has already passed, A-4 [https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/A0500/4_R1.PDF], while the Senate counterpart, S-50 [https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S0500/50_R1.PDF], has been second referenced to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. The Assembly bill passed last month included amendments that significantly addressed many of the concerns the League and local officials identified regarding the process, legal protections, and compliance tools. The Senate counterpart, S-50 [https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S0500/50_R1.PDF], was reported favorably out of the Senate Community and Urban Affairs

Committee on January 25 and second-referenced to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee (SBA). The bill is subject to further amendments if, and when, it progresses in the Senate. [S-50](#) [https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S0500/50_R1.PDF] will be considered by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on Monday, March 11, ahead of the Senate's next voting session on March 18.

Grant Center Spotlight

Municipal Stormwater Assistance Grants. Available through the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection to provide assistance to Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permittees with upgrades to their MS4 stormwater programs to comply with the requirements of the 2023 Tier A MS4 Permit renewal.

Funding: \$19 million in grants available, with \$75,000 for eligible MS4 permittees formerly classified at Tier B and \$25,000 for the exiting Tier A permittees to upgrade their MS4 Stormwater Programs to better align with the 2023 Tier A MS4 Permit renewal.

Application deadline: March 31, 2024.

Application links and more information: [NJDEP Municipal Stormwater Assistance Grants](https://dep.nj.gov/grantandloanprograms/municipal-stormwater-assistance-grants/) [<https://dep.nj.gov/grantandloanprograms/municipal-stormwater-assistance-grants/>]

Contact: stormwatermanager@dep.nj.gov
[<mailto:stormwatermanager@dep.nj.gov>]

For more grant opportunities, visit the League's [Grant Resource Center](https://www.njlm.org/538/Grant-Resource-Center) [<https://www.njlm.org/538/Grant-Resource-Center>].

Learning Opportunities

March 19 (North Jersey) and 20 (South Jersey). [Management Workshops: Part 2 Labor Management Series](https://www.njlm.org/1265/Management-Workshop-Series). [<https://www.njlm.org/1265/Management-Workshop-Series>] **Contract Construction** class in morning, discussing typical provisions of an agreement and how best to interpret and ensure that that agreement is clear, concise, and comprehensive. **Negotiations** class in the afternoon, including a discussion of methods to prepare for negotiations of a collectively bargained agreement. Visit the [Management Workshop Series](https://www.njlm.org/1265/Management-Workshop-Series) [<https://www.njlm.org/1265/Management-Workshop-Series>] page for more information and additional class topics and dates.

March 22, 9 a.m.-12:45 p.m. at your computer. [Budget, Ethics, and Procurement Update Webinar](https://www.njlm.org/Calendar.aspx?EID=367&month=3&year=2024&day=5&calType=0). [<https://www.njlm.org/Calendar.aspx?EID=367&month=3&year=2024&day=5&calType=0>] Important updates and information from the Division of Local Government Services on Budgeting, Ethics, and Procurement.

Get to Know Your Executive Board

Mayor Ras Baraka, Newark



Mayor Ras Baraka

Ras J. Baraka is the 40th Mayor of the City of Newark and has been an Executive Board Member since taking office in 2014. A Newark native whose family has lived in the city for more than 80 years, Mayor Baraka's agenda has reduced crime, addressed affordability, lowered unemployment, returned local control of schools after more than 20 years, and replaced all 23,000 known lead service lines in less than three years

free to residents.

He also presides as the President of NJ Urban Mayors Association; Co-Chair, National League of Cities Reimagining Public Safety Task Force; U.S. Conference of Mayors- Vice Chair for Ports, Transportation and Communications Committee; and Member, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Local Government Advisory Committee.

Mayor Baraka was educated in the Newark Public Schools. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and History from Howard University in Washington, D.C. and a master's degree in education supervision from St. Peter's University in Jersey City. His father, the late Amiri Baraka, was a legendary poet and playwright. His mother, Amina Baraka, is herself a renowned poet. A doting husband and father, Mayor Baraka is a published author who recently released the audible memoir "The Book of Baraka" and appeared on the Grammy-award winning album, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" in his role as an educator, and on his EP "What We Want."

Mayor William "Bill" Curtis, Bay Head

William "Bill" Curtis was elected Mayor of Bay Head in 2008 and joined the NJLM Executive Board in 2019. His local government experience spans New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He was a Republican Committeeman in East Goshen Township, West Chester, PA, for 10 years through 1991, and since 1999 has been active in Bay Head including as a member of the Planning Board and Borough Council prior to his role as Mayor.



Mayor Bill Curtis

He is the president of the Ocean County Mayors Association and a past president of the Point Pleasant Beach Rotary Club where he is a member of the Board of Directors and a three-time Paul Harris Fellow. He's a past member of the Bay Head Republican Club Steering Committee and a Past President of The Bay Head Regular Republican Organization, of which he is current trustee.

Mayor Curtis is also active in the NJLM and has been a member of the Legislative Committee's Intra Municipal Affairs Committee since 2018.

Starting his career as a high school physical education instructor and assistant varsity football coach in Toms River, Mayor Curtis moved into the business world holding positions at Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Frank B. Hall & Co. of PA, Inc., and Johnson and Higgins, where he was a Vice President and Manager of Employee Benefits Department from 1983 through 1996 in Philadelphia, then California, before heading to Bay Head and serving as President and proprietor at Curtis' Central Market. Currently, he is a property

manager. Mayor Curtis is a graduate of The Peddie School in Hightstown and has both his BA and M.Ed. from The University of Virginia.



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Magazine Moment

The March issue of *NJ Municipalities*' focus section looked at the many aspects of infrastructure, including impacts from environmental events and funding opportunities from ARPA.

In "Reviving Little Egg Harbor's Beaches" written by Little Egg Harbor CFO and Township Administrator Rodney Haines, and Jason Worth, VP, Operations Manager, T&M Associates, they

noted:

"The restoration of Mystic and Parkertown beaches is a shining example of how communities can unite to combat coastal erosion and protect their cherished shorelines. These projects offer renewed opportunities for recreation and contribute to the sustainability of local ecosystems. Little Egg Harbor's journey to restore its beaches is an inspiring narrative, highlighting the importance of safeguarding our precious waterfront areas."

Read the full story by [subscribing to *NJ Municipalities*](https://www.njlm.org/712/Subscribe) [<https://www.njlm.org/712/Subscribe>] today.

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If your municipality has recently used a vendor and feel that their services would benefit other municipalities, [email Tasneem Kapadia](mailto:tkapadia@njlm.org) [<mailto:tkapadia@njlm.org>], Advertising Manager, with their details so she can send them information about the League's magazine. Advertising in *NJ Municipalities* magazine promotes their services and could benefit other towns.

And please consider writing an article for the magazine. We're committed to sharing your success stories and concerns in the form of articles and op-eds for the publication. See the [author's guidelines](https://www.njlm.org/804/Submit-Editorial) [<https://www.njlm.org/804/Submit-Editorial>] for more information, or [email Managing Editor Amy Spiezio](mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org) [<mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org>]. We're now seeking submissions for May (due March 25) and June (due April 15).

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