

February 12, 2016

RE: Weekly Policy Update

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- II. Governor Seeks Disaster Declaration for 17 Counties for Jonas
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Dear Mayor:

Here is summary of some issues of interest to local governments.

- I. A-302, Revenue Restoration Bill Needs Amendment

On Monday, the Assembly State and Local Government Committee approved A-302. The sponsors of this bill acknowledge the need to begin to restore revenues meant for local use. The bill, however, should be amended before it proceeds any farther. A-302 includes a provision, which would deny locally elected and locally responsive Mayors and municipal governing bodies the ability to determine the best use for these moneys to meet the needs of their community. A-302 would require any restored funding be subtracted from the municipality's adjusted tax levy. For more on this, please see the League's February 12 letter.

Contact: Jon Moran, [jmoran@njslom.org](mailto:jmoran@njslom.org) or 609-695-3481, ext. 121

- II. Governor Seeks Disaster Declaration for 17 Counties for Jonas

On Thursday, Governor Christie announced that the State is seeking a Major Disaster Declaration for seventeen New Jersey counties that sustained an estimated \$82.6 million in damages due to the severe winter storm event that included heavy snow, high winds, and flooding during the period of January 22 -

29, 2016. A letter outlining the State's request for a Major Disaster Declaration for Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Somerset, Union, and Warren counties, was sent to President Obama through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In addition, Governor Christie is requesting snow assistance for Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Somerset, Union, and Warren counties. For more, please click [here](#).

### III. NJ Pension and Health Benefit Study Commission Report on Health Costs

On Thursday, the NJ Pension and Health Benefit Study Commission released a supplemental report on health benefits, available at <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/pdf/NJPensionCommission-Supplemental-Report-on-Health-Benefits.pdf>.

The Commission's report claims to have confirmed the necessary savings of over \$2 billion in health benefits spending annually to use to preserve pension benefits earned to date with less impact to employees and retirees' health benefits than envisioned in their 2015 report.

The report also focused on the shifting in responsibility for funding of teacher's retirement benefits. The Commission reiterated their goal that "any proposal to reallocate funding responsibilities for teacher's retiree benefits must be cost-neutral to the local tax base and limited to the amount of savings available from reforming active teachers and local employee and retiree health benefits."

The League provided significant comment and analysis on the Commission's first report last year. For more on our previous comments, please click [here](#). The Report's conclusions are likely to be referenced in Governor Christie's budget address next week. The League is reviewing the recommendations and will provide additional analysis in the upcoming days and weeks.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, [lbuckelew@njslom.org](mailto:lbuckelew@njslom.org) or 609-695-3481, ext. 112

### IV. State Budget Briefing Call

As referenced above, the Governor will give his annual budget address on Tuesday, February 16. Before that address, a conference call will be held to brief local officials. Chuck Richman, Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, and Tim Cunningham, the Director of the Division of Local

Government Services, along with representatives of the Treasury Department and the Office of Management and Budget will host a listen-only call to apprise mayors and other local officials on those elements of the Governor's budget message that affect local governments.

The call will start at 1:15pm on Tuesday the 16th.

The dial-in information is as follows: 888-636-3807 / Access Code: 9046681#

#### V. Transitional Aid Application Process

The Division of Local Government Services issued Local Finance Notice 2016-4 providing direction on the Transitional Aid Application Process. Calendar year municipalities that intend to apply for Transitional Aid must notify the Division, using the Notice of Intent to Apply, no later than Friday, February 19. For municipalities not currently receiving Transitional Aid, the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer will be required to attend a mandatory orientation meeting on March 4, 2016. The application deadline is March 21, 2016.

It is important to note, that any calendar year municipality who did not receive Transitional Aid in 2015 and applying for aid in 2016 must agree to State oversight that begins on the application due date not the date of the award. If no Transitional Aid is awarded to the municipality State oversight will be terminated.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, lbuckelew@njslom.org or 609-695-3481, ext. 112

#### VI. Upcoming Sustainable Jersey Events

Sustainable Jersey has asked us to share this information about their upcoming educational events. If you have questions about these events please call Winnie Fatton at Sustainable Jersey at 609-771-2855.

Webinars For Schools and Municipalities:

How Energy Efficiency Helps Schools and Districts Save Money and Energy

March 15, 2016 -- 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM REGISTER

## Sustainable Jersey's Re-vAMPed Municipal Energy Actions

March 16, 2016 – 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM REGISTER

### VII. NLC Library of Free Research Reports Online

The National League of Cities (NLC) provides research and analysis based on the experiences and observations of city leaders, information that can be used as resources by local government officials.

As a member of the NLC, this is one of many resources that the League and its members are entitled to. Over the next few weeks the League will be highlighting various NLC publications and research available to you.

#### Making Local Democracy Work: Municipal Officials' Views About Public Engagement (2010)

This report compiles information from a survey conducted in the summer of 2009 to municipal officials, both elected and managerial, to find out more about their views, attitudes, and local practices in public engagement

For questions on these or any policy issues, please do not hesitate to contact our Government Affairs team:

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Sincerely,

Michael J. Darcy, CAE

Executive Director