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## January 19, 2019

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### I. Marijuana Legalization Update

Over the holiday weekend, published reports in various outlets indicated that the Governor, the Senate President, and the Assembly Speaker have reached an agreement on the major broad strokes of legalization of adult use of cannabis. It has also been reported that news of this consensus on major sticking points was leaked prematurely, as other important issues, including issues of particular interest to municipalities, are still being negotiated.

From these news reports, it appears there is an agreement on how the state would tax cannabis products. The current legislative proposal puts the tax rate at 12%, which would include the State's sales tax. While the Governor's office never publicly stated what it believes the tax rate should be it has been reported consistently that the Governor wanted a 25% tax rate. Now, there is an apparent agreement to instead implement a **\$42 per ounce** state tax on the sale of recreational cannabis. The rationale behind this new approach is that taxing cannabis sales by weight will mitigate any negative impact based on market demands and provide a steadier revenue stream to the State.

Here are some important takeaways for local officials:

- It is our understanding that there is no agreement in place on the rate of the local option tax. The current proposal includes an optional 2% excise tax on any of the 4 proposed licenses. The League continues to argue that municipalities should have the flexibility to implement a rate up to 5%. **This is still an area of negotiation.**
- It is also our understanding that issue of expungement and restorative justice is

still subject to negotiation. Currently, the bill allows for the automatic eligibility for expungement of convictions for possession of 50 grams or less of marijuana. There remain concerns regarding an individual's cost of seeking expungement, which can be time-consuming, complicated and burdensome. **This too is still an area of negotiation.**

Some media accounts have suggested that a final vote could come this month. That would appear very unlikely since a number of issues remain open. Further, even with an agreement in place the respective legislative caucuses would need to be briefed, votes would need to be whipped and there could be further hearings and amendments on other issues. Thus, it appears more likely that a vote could come by the end of March.

**Please take action** and [contact your Legislators](#) immediately and let them know your thoughts on the issue. Further, we urge you to prioritize the issues highlighted above, that is the need to increase the 2% local option tax to 5% so that taxpayers are made whole and full funding and expansion of the expungement provisions. **Your timely outreach to your State representatives can help us achieve a positive outcome for municipalities.**

[The League's November 27 letter](#) has additional details as does the [PDF of the free webinar](#) offered by the League on November 30 and the Cannabis Legalization [web page](#).

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

## II. Celebrate your Municipality and Showcase its Beauty!

The 1<sup>st</sup> NJ Local Government Week is approaching quickly; have you started planning yet?

NJ Local Government week creates an opportunity to let your residents know about your municipal facilities and careers, and highlight the services that their local government provides on a daily basis.

Visit the League website for a [how-to packet](#) with ideas ranging from basic, no cost activities to some that are more complex.

Want the League to share the events that your municipality is planning to hold? [Complete this form on the League website](#) and let us help you spread the word! Share your activities and event photos with the League so that we may share on the League's website, social media and in *NJ Municipalities* magazine. And remember to use the #NJLocalGovt on social media.

## III. Free Cybersecurity Symposium by NJOHSP

Over the past year, numerous NJ public sector organizations have been impacted by cybersecurity incidents costing millions of dollars in financial losses and significant disruptions to operations. In most cases, poor cyber risk management allowed the threat

actors to succeed; most were not sophisticated attacks. The symposium is geared toward public sector organizations, especially those with limited cybersecurity resources. The purpose of the conference is to provide attendees with practical strategies, tactics, resources, and tools to help manage cyber risk in their respective organizations and become more resilient to cyber attacks.

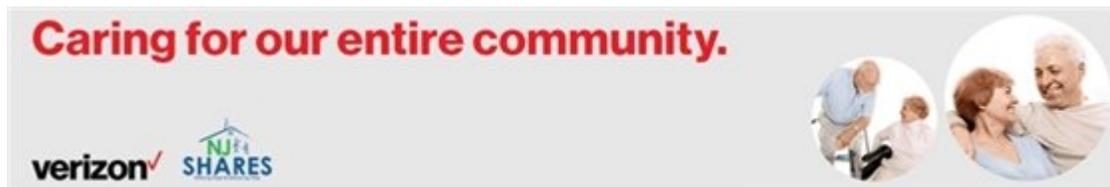
Public sector organization decision makers, including mayors, governing body members, business administrators, CFOs, etc., are encouraged to attend the symposium as it will focus on strategies and tactics that can be employed to help manage cyber risk.

Wednesday, March 20, 2019. 7:30 am Registration. 8:30 am Start.  
Location: The Event Center at iPlay America, Freehold, New Jersey.

For more [details and registration](#). Or visit the NJCCIC [web page](#).

For questions call NJCCIC at 609-963-6900 x7865.

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