



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

January 23, 2009

MTA Phone: 517-321-6467

MTA FAX: 517-321-8908

Please route to all interested parties in your township.

EMS COORDINATION COMMITTEE VOTES TO OPPOSE ACCREDITATION

Earlier today, the state Emergency Medical Services Coordination Committee (EMSCC) voted unanimously to halt national testing for all levels of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel after Dec. 31, 2012. The action was carefully worded to say that the decision will be followed unless the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians changes course (which is unlikely) to require accreditation of EMS paramedic training programs and to establish the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the EMS Professions (CoAEMSP) as the single national EMS accrediting agency. The action must now obtain final approval by the MI Department of Community Health (DCH). Should DCH concur with the EMSCC recommendation, the department will devise an implementation plan to address numerous resulting issues, including Michigan-specific training. MTA wishes to thank those who sent letters of concern to DCH on this issue.

SMALL CLAIMS COURT BILL IS VETOED

A bill approved by both the House and Senate during the lame duck session that would have raised the minimum threshold for damages that could be sought in small claims court was pocket vetoed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm. SB 786, sponsored by Sen. Wayne Kuipers (R- Holland), would have raised the current small claims court ceiling of \$3,000 to \$5,000 between July 1, 2009, and July 1, 2014. The bill was presented to the governor on Jan. 7. The governor has 14 days to sign legislation into law. However, due to complaints from district court judges and the Michigan Bar Association about raising the small claims ceiling, the governor decided not to sign the legislation. By not signing the bill or directly vetoing it after the legislative session has adjourned, the governor's inaction creates a very rare "pocket veto." MTA had already been messaging about the positives of having the ceiling raised in relation to local governments collecting unpaid personal property taxes. The bill was officially vetoed on Jan. 21.

REGIONALIZING ROAD COMMISSIONS

An idea coming out of the state Capitol in the new legislative session is regionalizing county road commissions. Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Sen. Jud Gilbert (R-Clay Twp.), is exploring the idea to see if regionalizing the road commission system will save tax dollars. The concept appears to have the backing of Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) under the "reform-first, money later" strategy. Advocates of the idea claim there could be administrative savings and equipment cost savings. Reaction from the County Road Association of MI (CRAM) is that road commissions are already sharing equipment and working together to make their dollars go farther. CRAM is further suggesting there are other things like changes to environmental requirements that may save locals much more money. The road commission regionalization idea comes at a time when there is significant discussion about changes in state gasoline taxes and other road funding revenues.

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS SET FOR FEBRUARY 3

Gov. Jennifer Granholm will deliver her seventh State-of-the-State address on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009, at 7 p.m. There are indications that the governor will announce the beginning of efforts to overhaul state government. State officials indicate that she wants to transform government to make it more flexible and responsive to new economic realities. It is expected that she will name Lt. Gov. John Cherry chair of a new executive committee of her cabinet that will oversee the multi-year effort.

NO REPORT NEXT WEEK

MTA staff will be participating in the Annual 2009 MTA Educational Conference & Expo in Detroit, Jan. 26-30, including the MTA Annual Meeting taking place on Friday, Jan. 30. Therefore, there will be no report next week. The MTA office will be closed Jan. 26-30.

END