



## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

February 6, 2009

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

### **GOVERNOR DELIVERS STATE OF THE STATE**

On Tuesday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm focused on downsizing Michigan government and promoting renewable energy as the two main themes in her seventh State of the State address. The governor's plan calls for downsizing the number of state departments and for the immediate elimination of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries. She also called for turning the DEQ wetlands program back to the Army Corps of Engineers. Her promotion of renewable energy as the next major provider of jobs includes a "45 by 2020 plan" to reduce Michigan's use of imported coal and natural gas and to delay DEQ consideration of permits for new coal fired plants. The governor also called for the ability of homeowners and businesses utilizing solar and/or wind energy to sell extra generated energy back to utility companies. Other highlights include plans to close three additional state prisons and a call to reduce state elected official's salary by 10 percent for those elected in 2010.

### **GOVERNOR TO REQUIRE BUY MICHIGAN FIRST PROGRAM**

During the State of the State, Gov. Granholm called for an expansion of the state's Buy Michigan First program to require all local units of government, school districts, colleges and universities to adopt their own Buy Michigan First policies. The intent is to have local tax dollars go to Michigan businesses. While, the Buy Michigan First idea may seem laudable, and most townships likely already support Michigan businesses when it's financially responsible to do so, it could have negative affects by causing the cost of government to increase, especially for capital expenditures. Details of the program are expected during the presentation of the governor's proposed budget next week.

### **STATE TAX COMMISSION ORDERS ONE YEAR SALES STUDY FOR PROPERTY TAXES**

On Monday Feb. 3, the State Tax Commission approved an order requiring a one year sales study be used for all property in the state classified as residential for 2009. This order comes just three weeks prior to mailing assessment notices. The Commission will consider exemptions to the order. A request for exemption must come from the county equalization director by Friday, Feb. 13, to Kelli Sobel, Exec. Sec. to the State Tax Commission. Equalization directors must present compelling evidence of the need for a two year study. This order reverses the procedure established by the same body in August of 2007, where permission of the equalization director and the State Tax Commission was required to use a one year study. This means that many communities that have already completed the process of setting property values and may have already printed the required notices will be required to scrap that work and start over, just days before notices must be placed in the mail.

### **U.S. HOUSE PASSES ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE: U.S. SENATE CONTINUES DEBATE**

Last week, the U.S. House approved its version of an \$819 billion economic stimulus plan. Since that time, the focus has shifted to the Senate where debate on the size (currently larger than the House version) and contents of the stimulus plan are taking place. As of today, no Senate vote has occurred. In the meantime, MTA has been working with the governor's office to collect township projects that are ready to go. Nearly 500 such projects have been submitted to the governor for consideration. If your township has not submitted your project list, there may still be time to do so. Information on the federal stimulus package is available on our Web site at [www.michigantownships.org](http://www.michigantownships.org). Project information or questions regarding the process should be directed to [tom@michigantownships.org](mailto:tom@michigantownships.org).

### **GOVERNOR APPOINTS TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR TO STATE ASSESSORS BOARD**

Gov. Granholm named Belknap Township Supervisor Alan Berg to serve on the State Assessors Board. Supervisor Berg serves as a Level III assessor and will be a strong voice for rural communities and all townships alike. He replaces longtime board member and Supervisor Maxine McClelland (Big Rapids Chtr. Twp.). Thanks to Micki for her years of service and congratulations to Alan!

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