



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

July 25, 2008

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

LEGISLATURE FINISHES GENERAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET

The House of Representatives held one day of session this week, on Wednesday, and the Senate came back for the day on Thursday. One of the chief accomplishments was final passage of the general government appropriations bill. The bill is now forwarded to the governor for signature. Revenue sharing was a key issue within the budget bill. Statutory revenue sharing payments for next year will see a 2 percent increase compared to the current year. All constitutional revenue sharing payments for next year will be no less than the current year level. To allow the state to participate in select property tax appeals cases, \$500,000 has also been added to this year's budget. In particular, the money is targeted to large scale appeals filed by utility companies.

WIND ENERGY LOCAL ZONING PRE-EMPTION SENT TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

The Michigan House of Representatives rejected the Senate version of one of the main bills in the energy package on Wednesday, including language that would have pre-empted local zoning authority regarding wind generation. The House discharged a key bill in the energy package (SB 213) from committee and immediately amended it to match previous legislation already approved by the House months earlier. The House changes included no language threatening to local zoning authority. The bill has now been sent to a conference committee by the House and Senate to settle the differences between the House and Senate. The Senate named Sens. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Twp.), Randy Richardville (R-Frenchtown Chtr. Twp.) and Dennis Olshove (D-Warren) as conferees. The House has named Reps. Frank Accavitti, Jr. (D-Eastpointe), Kathy Angerer (D-Dundee Twp.) and David Palsrok (R-Manistee).

MTA is requesting that township officials contact their legislators and members of the conference committee to request that local zoning authority remain intact in the final version of SB 213. The energy package has been circulating around the Capitol for most of the year; however, the inclusion of a local zoning pre-emption just entered the debate in recent weeks. On June 27, the Senate adopted a 66-page substitute (S-5) to SB 213 that says, "A wind energy conversion facility that is issued an expedited siting certificate (by the Michigan Public Service Commission) is exempt from any local zoning ordinance except for provisions regulating setbacks and noise." The bill outlines circumstances under which the MPSC is required to grant an expedited siting certificate and says that "If the MPSC grants an expedited siting certificate, the certificate shall take precedence over a conflicting local ordinance, law, rule, regulation, policy, or practice that prohibits or regulates the location or construction of a transmission line for which the commission has issued a certificate."

SENATOR LEVIN INTRODUCES RESOLUTION TO FINALIZE WATER COMPACT

On Wednesday, U.S. Sens. Carl Levin (D-MI) and George Voinovich (R-OH) formally introduced a joint resolution to ratify the Great Lakes Compact. The Great Lakes Compact is an effort by the eight Great Lakes states to prevent water diversions from the Great Lakes Basin and to keep the management of the water resource in the hands of the Great Lakes states. Michigan and Pennsylvania recently became the last two states to pass the Compact at the state level. The final step in securing the Great Lakes Compact is to gain approval by the U.S. Congress and a signature from the president. Sen. Levin's efforts start that final process.

POLICY PLATFORM RESOLUTIONS DUE BY SEPTEMBER 3

Do you have a good policy platform idea for township government? MTA is accepting resolutions from member townships and county chapters for presentation at the 2009 MTA Annual Meeting, to be held on Friday, Jan. 30, 2009. Deadline for submittal is Sept. 3, 2008. For additional information, contact MTA Legislative Liaison David Bertram at 517-321-6467 or at david@michigantownships.org.

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