



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

RENEWABLE ENERGY VOTE COULD COME NEXT WEEK

Significant progress was made in a variety of meetings over the past week related to the renewable energy package that is poised for action in two conference committees in the Michigan Legislature. While there is still some uncertainty whether the package is ready for a vote, with Gov. Jennifer Granholm growing impatient and Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) stating that some minor work remains, it is generally assumed that a vote will take place next week. The two key bills in the package are HB 5524, which would guarantee the state's incumbent electric providers at least 90 percent of the market and SB 213, which would create a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that electric providers either generate or purchase a certain percentage of renewable energy. The latter of these two bills caught the attention of local governments when language originally approved by the Senate earlier this summer would have pre-empted local zoning related to wind turbines and transmission lines. MTA has been involved in several productive workgroup meetings and anticipates that the final version of SB 213 will not impact zoning related to the siting of wind turbines, but will provide a revised process for high voltage transmission lines that will be installed in the designated "Wind Energy Resource Zone" called for in the legislation.

SPEAKER DILLON RECALL VOTE TO BE ON THE BALLOT

A question to voters in the 17th House district as to whether House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Chtr. Twp.) should be recalled will be on the Nov. 4 ballot. This was decided after an appeal was filed by Dillon and a stay by secretary of state to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court to block the recall attempt was denied. The secretary of state raised a concern over recall petitions that were circulated by nonresidents of the district. It was also determined by the Bureau of Elections that there were enough valid signatures to place the measure on the ballot. This now creates an unusual situation for Speaker Dillon where there will be a question on the ballot to recall him while his name is also on the ballot for re-election. While the likely scenario is that Speaker Dillon will be successful on both fronts, there is now the possibility that he could be removed from office for the final six weeks (lame-duck session) of this term if the recall is approved.

REFORM MICHIGAN GOVERNMENT NOW PROPOSAL WILL NOT BE ON THE BALLOT

On Monday, the Michigan Supreme Court in a 6-1 ruling upheld the Court of Appeals decision to take the Reform Michigan Government Now (RMGN) proposal off the November ballot. Early in the week, proposal supporters were uncertain whether to seek federal court action in a last attempt to get the proposal on the ballot. There were three separate concurring opinions to explain why the proposal should not be on the ballot. The MTA Board of Directors unanimously voted in mid-August to oppose the RMGN proposal. The action by MTA was taken primarily due to concerns that the ballot language would prohibit local clerks, and possibly those that serve on election commissions, from endorsing any candidate or ballot proposal in any election that they administer. MTA Board members also raised concerns about proposed changes to the legislative redistricting process and that the proposal was attempting to make broad changes to the entire state constitution instead of a single amendment.

FREE WORKSHOPS TO CREATE LOCAL MAPPING AND DATA SETS

MTA and the Michigan Council of Local Governments (MCOLG) are partnering with the U.S. Geological Survey on an initiative called the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The principal goal of NSDI is to work with stakeholder communities to create an environment where geographic data sets (such as roads, parcels and drains) are created and maintained at the local level, but systematically supported by resources at all levels of government. Three workshops will be held to educate local government policy makers on the NSDI, the benefits, to Michigan communities and possible strategies for implementing durable, mutually beneficial regional or statewide coordination. Registration is free to MTA members and members of other MCOLG organizations. They will take place on Nov. 7 in Marquette, Nov. 10 in Lansing and Dec. 10 in Gaylord and will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. For more registration details go to the MTA web site (Education, other opportunities) <http://www.michigantownships.org/alltraining.asp>.

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