



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

November 21, 2008

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

SENATE PLANNING TO CHANGE TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY RELATED TO TRUCK ROUTES

A strong effort is being made in the Michigan Senate to change townships' truck route ordinance authority. Sen. Jud Gilbert (R-Clay Twp.), chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, is singling out the authority of townships by pushing an amendment that would void all existing township truck route ordinances on any county primary road unless approved by the county road commission by April 1, 2009. The amendment would also require any future township truck route ordinances to be approved by county road commissions. The amendment is likely to be attached to HB 4839, an unrelated bill that addresses abandoned vehicles. The House already approved this bill, as did a Senate committee, but in its current form on the floor of the Senate the bill poses no threat to the authority of townships. The Senate could also try to amend other bills with the same amendment. MTA is asking township officials to immediately contact their senator and ask that they oppose the amendment that would negatively affect the ability of townships to maintain their current truck routes and establish new ones in the future. Use <http://senate.michigan.gov/> to find contact information for your senator. Please share a copy of your correspondence with MTA as well by e-mailing a copy to david@michigantownships.org or by faxing to 517-321-8908.

MTA REQUESTS YOUR ASSISTANCE IN MOVING CABLE LAW LEGISLATION

MTA has been strongly advocating for a fix to Michigan's new cable law (Public Act 480 of 2006) related to fees that local governments have the option to charge for Public, Education and Government (PEG) channels on cable access systems. There was an agreement with legislators at the time PA 480 was approved that local governments with PEG systems could charge up to 2 percent specifically for PEG channels. However, the language in PA 480 is not clear and cable companies have taken, and will continue to take advantage, of the situation. Legislation has been introduced in both chambers—HB 5047, sponsored by Rep. Bert Johnson (D-Detroit) and SB 636, sponsored by Sen. Samuel "Buzz" Thomas III (D-Detroit)—to implement details of the original intent of the cable agreement. As you might expect, the cable companies are strongly opposing the legislation. These bills will make sure that all municipalities across the state have the option of getting a 2 percent fee to support their government, school and public channels when their current cable franchises expire. Legislators promised this to municipalities when they approved Michigan's video legislation two years ago, but not all cable companies are honoring this promise. MTA asks that township officials contact their state senator, state representative and legislative leaders **immediately** and ask that they support SB 636 or HB 5047, requesting that these bills be brought up for a vote. Please use the following links for contact information about your legislators—for the Senate: <http://senate.michigan.gov/> and for the House: <http://house.michigan.gov/replist.asp>. Also, use the following link, www.michigantownships.org, for more information and a sample letter.

DEQ TO HOST REGIONAL FOCUS GROUPS ON GROUNDWATER PERMIT PROCESS

DEQ will soon schedule regional meetings to improve the process for issuing Groundwater Discharge permits. Currently, DEQ, local health departments, and in some cases, townships that have ordinances governing community sewer systems, have overlapping jurisdiction and procedures for the permit process that are interpreted differently. Many times, it is confusing who plays what role in the process resulting in unclear information on what is required when developing land. The regional meetings are an opportunity for township officials and others to have direct input into the process and to help develop a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities between the various governmental entities involved in groundwater permits. The meetings, or focus groups, are being planned for the southwest, southeast, northwest, and Upper Peninsula areas of the state and will likely occur before year end. Those township officials/personnel who are interested in participating in these meetings can become involved by **immediately** providing your name, e-mail (mailing address only in the absence of an e-mail), phone number and region of the state to Tom Frazier at (517) 321-6467 or tom@michigantownships.org. Questions can also be directed to Tom Frazier. Once information is gathered from the focus group meetings, representatives for DEQ, local health departments, MTA and others will work to streamline a groundwater permit process that will be more effective and efficient for everyone involved.

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