



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

December 12, 2008

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

LEGISLATURE APPROVES SATURDAY TAX COLLECTION FIX

The Senate approved legislation that fixes an issue raised by an informal attorney general opinion that would have required treasurers to be in their office on Saturday, Feb. 28 to collect property taxes. Current law requires that treasurers be in their offices from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the last day taxes can be paid without penalty and interest. Under general provisions of state law, anytime a deadline falls on a weekend or holiday the deadline is always pushed to the next business day. It was opined that this situation was not impacted by the general provisions of state law and treasurers would be required to be in their offices this coming February. HB 6623, introduced by Rep. Steve Bieda (D-Warren), clarifies that whenever due dates fall on a weekend, the due date will be delayed to the next business day. Final signature on the legislation by the governor is expected by the end of the year. All treasurers will now be required to be in their offices on Monday, March 2, 2009. In townships where property taxes are due on Feb. 28, the taxes can now be paid until March 2 without penalty.

THREAT TO TOWNSHIP TRUCK ROUTE AUTHORITY REMAINS; CONTACT REPS TOO

The Michigan Senate held one marathon session day this week that lasted almost 18 hours. However, the Senate did not address HB 4839, a transportation bill that has been identified as the likely bill to attach an amendment to drastically change truck route ordinance authority for townships. No vote was taken this week, but once again there were significant discussions about the issue amongst senators. The discussions also included many conversations with MTA lobbyists and numerous lobbyists representing gravel haulers who are pushing the amendment. Unfortunately, the threat of the amendment remains as the Senate returns to session for what is expected to be another session blitz on Thursday, Dec. 18. Township officials should contact their senator and should also contact their state representative to ask that they oppose any such effort. If the Senate approves the truck route amendment, the bill would go before the House immediately for a vote to concur on the bill. Ask your representative to oppose any changes made by the Senate that would change truck route authority for townships. Use the following link for legislator contact information www.senate.michigan.gov and www.house.michigan.gov.

GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER CUTS SPARE REVENUE SHARING

On Wednesday, Gov. Jennifer Granholm submitted, and the House and Senate Appropriations Committees approved, current fiscal year cuts of \$134 million, while sparing statutory revenue sharing of any cuts. Operation funding for schools, community colleges and universities were also spared. The action was predicated by declining revenue forecasts and a continued downturn in the economy. The cuts help to solve the estimated deficit of \$240 million for the current fiscal year. This week's cuts are less than originally feared due to a higher than anticipated carryforward from the previous fiscal year budget and a proposed federal stimulus package, which should be forthcoming in January. Many consider the cuts a first step as additional reductions may be needed after the first of the year depending on conditions with the state and national economy including the status of the U.S. auto industry. Townships should be very conservative in planning their budgets as sales tax revenues are expected to decline resulting in reductions on constitutional revenue sharing too.

PRESIDENT BUSH LAST HOPE FOR AUTO INDUSTRY BRIDGE LOAN

On Thursday, the U.S. Senate fell short in an attempt to provide \$14 billion in short-term relief for the U.S. auto industry. The agreement fell apart over efforts to force union wage concessions by the end of 2009. Money would have come from a \$25 billion fund set aside to help the automakers retool factories to produce more fuel-efficient vehicles rather than from part of the \$700 billion bailout of Wall Street. While President Bush has previously opposed this approach, he could choose to use the remaining \$15 billion of the first half of the money made available for the Wall Street bailout for the auto industry. This short-term funding is critical to preserve jobs and our tax base and to keep the U.S. auto industry viable in Michigan and the nation. **MTA asks you to immediately contact the White House at (202) 456-1414 or 456-1111 to urge the President to use the \$15 billion set aside for Wall Street for the U.S. auto industry.**

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