



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE WOULD FUND "READY TO GO" PROJECTS

President-elect Obama and the U.S. Congress are currently considering a multi-hundred billion dollar economic stimulus package to be voted upon in early January. The effort is to put millions of people to work on "ready to go" infrastructure projects. [Click here](#) for a complete list of programs that provide the greatest benefit to townships. One way to stimulate the economy is to reinstate the General Revenue Sharing Program for local units of governments. The National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT) and MTA urge you to [contact](#) your two U.S. Senators (Levin and Stabenow) and your member of the U.S. House to urge them to include at least \$50 million of General Revenue Sharing Funds in the economic stimulus package and to direct those funds to local governments including townships. NATaT and MTA have prepared a sample letter for members of the [U.S. House](#) and [Senate](#) for your use. **We also ask that you contact your federal legislators in support of those other programs listed in the document referred to above that provide the greatest benefit to townships, along with any of your own specific township "ready to go" projects. Also, please contact the governor's office immediately about your specific projects.**

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS A KEY FOCUS OF FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDS

While MDOT has submitted a long list of transportation projects to be considered for receipt of federal economic stimulus funds, local road and bridge projects may need local officials to fight for part of the funding. If your township has a local road or bridge project you would like to see receive the expedited federal dollars, now is the time to act. Most local county road commissions are in the process of compiling lists of projects to submit to their own congressman for consideration. If you have any local projects that are already on the short range plan (three-year plan) or the long range plan and are ready to go (can start construction within 180 days), you should work with your local county road commission. Local projects should also be shared with your Metro Planning Organization (MPO) or your Michigan Rural Task Force. Make sure the project is on their lists being submitted to Congress. Time is of the essence as there is a very short window for submitting project lists.

STUDY GROUP LOOKS AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEALTH CARE AND CONSOLIDATION

Legislation passed last year creating a Legislative Commission on Government Efficiency. That Commission is prepared to conclude its yearlong study with a report to the Legislature. Many of its recommendations are likely to stir great debate. One issue being discussed is whether to combine all state and local government and school employees into one health care program. Schools have drawn constant criticism for decades for using a health insurance plan that is administered by the largest teachers union in the state. The inclusion of local government employees into a statewide plan is likely to generate many questions. Township operations are much more diverse than other forms of government. Could such a plan require a township to use a plan that might be more expensive than it currently offers its employees? Will it require townships to offer insurance? The commission also floated a concept to change revenue sharing to reward communities that consolidate services and penalize communities that don't. The commission was not prepared to discuss the issue publicly at its last meeting, but MTA offered comment that in some situations cooperative agreements make financial sense and in others they do not. Each cooperative agreement is unique and must be treated as such. MTA also emphasized that any steps in this direction must recognize the countless cooperative agreements that already exist between townships and other units of local government.

NO WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT NEXT WEEK

A *Weekly Legislative Report* will not be issued next week due to the Christmas holiday. It will resume the following week. The MTA legislative staff wishes everyone a joyous holiday season. With the help of all township officials we look forward to making it a prosperous new year for all of Michigan.

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