



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

February 15, 2008

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

### **ANNEXATION REFORM PACKAGE APPROVED BY SENATE COMMITTEE**

The Senate Natural Resources & Environment Committee approved a six bill annexation-detachment reform package on Wednesday, Feb. 13 that is supported by MTA. Senate Bills 1078-1083 are reintroductions of a compromise package of bills that reflected an earlier agreement between the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and MTA. In 2003, that package gained Senate approval by a 37-1 vote but was never addressed in the House. This legislative package is critical in order to address Michigan's outdated annexation and detachment laws that undermine land use planning and zoning by townships and to support cooperative economic development projects. In an era when everyone is working to increase cooperation and to cut down expenses, ugly annexation battles only hinder that process. Unfortunately, MML is now opposing the bills and is claiming the package "would prevent community growth, stifle new jobs, and hurt economic development opportunities." During a Feb. 6 committee hearing, township officials from Milford Charter Township, Meridian Charter Township and Northville Charter Township testified that the current annexation laws are (or have recently) causing serious problems in their townships. They all made appeals that annexation laws are in dire need of reform. Presently, a real annexation threat exists in Northville Charter Township related to the former State Psychiatric Hospital property, involving more than 400 acres. MTA thanks the leadership of the Senate Natural Resources & Environmental Affairs Committee for approving SBs 1078-1083. The package will now go before the full Senate for consideration. Please contact your Senator and ask that they support these bills. Use the following link for Senator contact information <http://senate.michigan.gov/senators/senfull2007.htm>.

### **MAJOR ZONING AND PLANNING LEGISLATION NEARS COMPLETION**

House and Senate Committees reported out bills this week that will impact the state's zoning and planning laws. The Senate is now considering the final passage of HB 5032, offered by Rep. Barb Byrum (D-Onondaga Twp.). This legislation makes numerous technical amendments to the new Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. The legislation was compiled through the efforts of several groups that were impacted by the new zoning laws. The second piece of legislation that is nearing completion is SB 206 offered by Sen. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Twp.). SB 206 creates the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. This legislation combines the Township Planning Act with the laws that govern city and county planning. This legislation is the culmination of several years of hard work to try and consolidate the three acts. The new planning act would be scheduled to take effect on Sept. 1. Both bills await action in their respective chambers, but could be sent to the governor for final approval as soon as the end of next week.

### **AGENDA SET FOR MARCH 11 MTA CAPITOL CONFERENCE IN LANSING**

MTA recently received confirmation that House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Charter Twp.) has agreed to address township officials during the Opening Session of MTA's Capitol Conference. The one-day event will take place just two blocks east of the Capitol at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing on Tuesday, March 11, 2008. Topics being addressed throughout the conference include: Michigan's Economy: The Impact on Local Government Revenue; Recall Pressures – State and Local; Law Enforcement without State Police? and the New State Mandates Committee. Register by Feb. 26 for the MTA Capitol Conference, and receive the discount rate of \$75. For more information, or to register, call us at 517-321-6467 or go to <http://www.michigantownships.org/capitolconf.asp>. The Conference is your opportunity to stay on top of legislative issues facing townships.

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