



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

December 8, 2006

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

SENATE TO VOTE ON CABLE FRANCHISE LEGISLATION ON TUESDAY

The Michigan Senate is planning to vote on legislation (HB 6456) being advocated by AT&T and cable companies on Tuesday, December 12. In an unusual procedural move, the bill was re-referred from the Technology & Energy Committee to the Government Operations Committee, which is chaired by Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming). The bill was reported out of committee on the next day. Sen. Sikkema stated that there were several areas that were not yet resolved in the bill. He said that amendments would be offered on the floor. Only minor changes were made to the bill in committee, including an attempt to resolve the Metro Act credit language that still allows for AT&T to reduce payments to local governments if the Public Service Commission fails to grant the company a property tax credit. An amendment, offered by Sen. Cassis (R-Novi) that failed in committee, but that has general support, would allow local governments to keep their existing cable franchises unless another competitor entered that community and provided service to 5 percent of residential households. **MTA asks that township officials contact their senators in support of the Cassis "abrogation" amendment. It will be offered during the floor vote.**

OFFICIALS MUST CONTACT LEGISLATORS REGARDING ROAD COMMISSION BILLS

The Legislature is poised to pass HB 4315, offered by Rep. Jack Hoogendyk (R-Texas Chtr. Twp.), but the legislation is hanging by a thread. The legislation, which has been tied up in a conference committee for months was finally voted out of the conference committee this week. The bill will offer the option for a county commission to expand the size of the county road commission from 3 members to 5 members. County road commissioners have been lobbying legislators to vote against the legislation. As a result, the House only managed 56 yes votes on the bill, the minimum needed to pass. A motion was made to reconsider the vote, which means the House will vote on this issue again next week. **Township officials need to contact both their senator and representative before noon on Tuesday to voice their support of this optional legislation.**

LEGISLATURE APPROVES CHANGES TO MASTER PLAN PROCEDURES

HB 5886 offered by Rep. John Stakoe (R-Highland Twp.) was approved by the Legislature and is currently awaiting signature by the governor. The legislation changes the procedures used to approve or amend a master plan as established by PA 263 of 2001. The legislation reduces the time allowed of other governments to review the proposed plan. Under current law, townships are sent copies of the changes for review and comment. Those comments are then sent to the county, which adds its own comments. Under HB 5886, all comments are sent back to the community making the change. Review and comment must be completed within 63 days on new plans and 40 days on amended plans.

HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MAINTAINS LOCAL CONTROL ON FERTILIZER

After nearly two weeks of intense negotiations on a substitute for SB 840, the fertilizer bill, the House Agriculture Committee dropped efforts to make changes to the bill. One key consideration was an effort to include a local pre-emption on fertilizer ordinances. Fortunately, that effort was abandoned. In the end, none of the participating interest groups were supportive of the language that would amend the legislation and SB 840 was reported to the House floor without changes from the Senate passed version. Special thanks to Chairman Rep. Neal Nitz (R-Baroda Twp.) and minority vice-chair Rep. Jeff Mayes (D-Bangor Chrt. Twp.) for taking MTA's concerns into consideration. MTA supports the bill as reported and anticipates no additional changes on the House floor.

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