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ProtectMyTown.us launches to empower Illinois residents

Mayors statewide urge residents to oppose cuts in local funding



Barrington Area Council
Of Governments

Illinois mayors and municipal groups throughout Illinois have launched a statewide movement aimed at activating Illinois residents to voice their opposition to proposed state cuts in local revenue.



The new website and social media platform – ProtectMyTown.us – enables Illinoisans to directly engage their state legislators as well as Governor Bruce Rauner. The website urges the state to resist attempts to use local revenue – the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) – to fill state budget gaps, which shifts the tax burden on to local communities and taxpayers.



“ProtectMyTown.us serves as a direct communication vehicle that gives residents across the state the ability to make their voices heard on this important issue and understand how it impacts their daily lives,” said Addison Mayor Richard Veenstra, who serves as President of the DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference. “With only a few clicks, residents can send a note to their state legislators and the Governor asking them to protect funds that provide for basic services on a daily basis.”



Educate. Advocate. Empower.

After logging on to www.ProtectMyTown.us, it only takes three easy steps to directly contact your legislator and the Governor: 1) Fill out your information; 2) Review your letter; and 3) Click the “Send Letter” button to complete the form. Residents can also forward and share the site through Facebook and Twitter, encouraging their friends, family and followers to join the movement as well.



McHENRY COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

At stake is \$1.2 billion, generated by local residents and collected by the state before being distributed back to municipalities, where it belongs. The LGDF accounts for anywhere between 10 to 20 percent of a municipality’s operating budget and is allocated for essential services, such as police and fire, road repairs and maintenance, flood prevention, garbage collection and snow plowing. Proposals have called for the state to take at least \$120 million in local funds, impacting all Illinois municipalities.



“The City of Chicago stands with cities, towns and villages across Illinois in calling on leaders in Springfield to ensure every municipality receives our fair share of state funding,” said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. “Plugging the state budget gap on the backs of local governments does a disservice to every resident of Illinois.”



“Reducing our local share would result in significant local budget holes, ensuring that taxpayers pay more and get less in return,” said Gerald Bennett, Mayor of Palos Hills and President of the Southwest Conference of Mayors. “Cutting our revenue will not solve the problem but will just pass the financial burden directly onto our residents”



SOUTH SUBURBAN MAYORS & MANAGERS ASSOCIATION



WILL COUNTY
GOVERNMENTAL LEAGUE

*Barrington Area Council of Governments • City of Chicago • DuPage Mayors and Managers Conference
Illinois Municipal League • Lake County Municipal League • McHenry County Council of Governments
Metro West Council of Government • Metropolitan Mayors Caucus • Northwest Municipal Conference
Southwest Conference of Mayors • South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association • Will County Governmental League*

Protect My Town is a coordinated effort between local councils of government, including the DuPage Mayors & Managers Conference, the Barrington Area Council of Governments, the Metro West Council of Government, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, the Southwest Conference of Mayors and the Will County Governmental League. The mayors and municipal groups are also working closely with the Illinois Municipal League and its efforts to preserve LGDF statewide.

“Cities and villages throughout the state are at a critical juncture,” said Steve Ward, Village President of South Elgin and Metro West Council of Government President. “The decisions made in Springfield in the next few weeks will have long-term effects on the future of local government, especially when it comes to public safety, public works and infrastructure projects.”

The mayors noted that municipalities have already endured significant funding cuts amid rising costs during the past several years. In its Fiscal Year 2018 budget, the state reduced traditional local revenue sources for cities and towns throughout Illinois by \$420 million, according to data collected from municipalities, the Illinois State Comptroller’s Office, and the Illinois Department of Revenue. That includes: a \$120 million cut in the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF); a \$227 million cut in personal property replacement tax (PPRT), or revenues to local governments by corporations; and a \$73 million cut through a new 2 percent sales tax collection fee charged to municipalities.

“Cities and villages throughout the state have had to make tough decisions and we have been on the front lines when it comes to responsibly balancing budgets,” said South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association President Vernard Alsberry, Jr., who also serves as the Village President of Hazel Crest. “We want to help the state overcome its financial challenges, but we need to find a solution that will not lead to more unfunded mandates or reduce the amount of local revenue that inhibits our ability to provide services.”