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January 31, 2020

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Municipal Clerks: Please forward to your Mayor, Governing Body and Department Heads.

I. State Issues

a. Legislation Introduced Creating Open Public Records Study Commission

Senator Corrado has introduced [S-180](#), which establishes a fourteen member Open Public Records Act Study Commission. The bill has been referenced to Senate State Government Committee. The League strongly supports S-180 and we thank Senator Corrado and Assemblyman Dancer, who has proposed the Assembly companion A-2358, for introducing this legislation based on [League Conference Resolution 2018-10](#). The time has come for a comprehensive reform by all of the stakeholders on this 18 year old law. For more details on S-180 please see our [recent blog post](#).

Please contact your Senator and Assembly representatives urging them to pass S-180. Furthermore, if you have not done so already, please consider adopting the [resolution](#) calling for an OPRA study commission.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x112.

b. Plastic Bag Ban Bill Advances

Yesterday in Trenton, the Senate Energy and Environment Committee amended and released a bill that would phase in a ban on non-reusable plastic bags and other food and drink containers.

As you may recall, the State Senate and General Assembly failed to agree on, and did not pass, a plastic bag ban bill, in the waning days of New Jersey's 218th Legislature. The bill, which the Committee advanced yesterday, was reintroduced in the current session as S-864. (A copy reflecting the amendments is not yet available, on-line.)

As introduced this session, the bill would have banned plastic and paper bags and polystyrene food containers, and limited the availability of plastic straws. The ban on plastic bags, paper bags and polystyrene food containers was to be phased-in, over two years. We understand that the amendments yesterday will, instead, require the ban to be phased-in over 18 months.

A companion, A-1978, to this session's original Senate bill awaits action in the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee.

Contact: Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, jmoran@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

c. Bill Mandating Additional Training and Certifications Scheduled for Committee Hearing

Scheduled for a hearing before the Assembly [State and Local Government Committee](#) on Monday, February 3 is [A-678](#), a bill opposed by the League. A-678 would mandate training and certification requirements for zoning officers and land use board administrators.

While the League endorses continuing education for appointed and elected officials, we have concerns that these new requirements are not only unnecessary, but bureaucratic and infringe on local discretion of hiring practices. Additionally, A-678 impedes efforts to reduce costs through shared service agreements by providing the Department of Community Affairs with broad authority to prohibit municipalities from sharing the services of zoning officers and land use board administrators.

We urge our members to contact your [Assembly representatives](#) to express these concerns and ask them to oppose A-678.

Contact: Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, fmarshall@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x137.

II. Federal Issue

a. U.S. House Advances Infrastructure Framework

The National League of Cities (NLC) [reports](#) that, on Wednesday, leadership in the House of Representatives, led by the Chairmen of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR), Energy and Commerce Committee Rep. Frank Pallone (NJ), and Ways and Means Committee Rep. Richard Neal (MA), released their

'framework' for comprehensive infrastructure investment.

The Federal government last authorized a multi-year infrastructure bill in 2015. That bill, the FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation), is set to expire on September 30, at the end of the current Federal Fiscal Year.

The NLC has called on Congress to step up their infrastructure efforts and rebuild together with local leaders. The announcement of an infrastructure framework by the House infrastructure committees is great news for residents and communities across America," said NLC President Joe Buscaino, Councilmember, Los Angeles, California. "Cities, towns and villages are ready to partner with Congress to bring a bold vision for transportation networks, water needs, and to invest in the skilled workforce needed to rebuild and reimagine the infrastructure in our communities. We must invest in our country and our people by building up the places that we call 'home,' and we applaud Chairmen DeFazio, Neal and Pallone for leading with urgency."

The new "[Moving Forward](#)" framework would lead to a \$760 billion infrastructure bill. The plan, over the next five years, would rebuild the nation's roads, bridges, transit systems, railways, airports, ports, inland waterways, wastewater and drinking water systems, brownfields, and broadband. The NLC has been calling on Congress to "[Rebuild With Us](#)" and step up on infrastructure, and this framework reflects our shared priorities for rebuilding and creating a skilled workforce that will get projects moving in America's cities, towns and villages.

In support of this national effort, February 5-6 League President Jim Perry will be participating in the NLC State Municipal League Executive Directors and Presidents Fly-In lobby event in Washington DC. He will join with his counterparts from State municipal leagues across the country to meet with members of Congress and emphasize the importance of advancing this infrastructure framework.

Contact: Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, jmoran@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x121.

III. Annual League Conference

a. Claim Your CEUs from the 2019 League Conference

Attention Municipal Officials! Do Not Forget to Claim Your CEUs from the 2019 NJLM Annual Conference! Visit the [Conference Tracking page](#) to claim your credits.

IV. Also of Interest

a. Show Off Your City Contest Deadline Feb. 3

The Third Annual Show Off Your City Contest is accepting entries through February 3. Municipalities are invited to send us photos of their tourist attractions, downtown areas, economic development initiatives, parks, city halls, community groups and new projects. Entries will be posted on the [League's Facebook](#) page, website and some featured in the April issue of *NJ Municipalities*, and possibly other issues.

A winner will be chosen and receives a free League publication of their choice! Photos can be submitted to [Email: aspiezio@njlm.org](mailto:aspiezio@njlm.org), or mailed on CD or flash drive to 222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608.

For full details, visit the [Show Off Your City Contest webpage](#).

b. Light Up Public Spaces for Suffrage

NJLM's Women in Municipal Government Committee (WIMG) invites municipalities to light up their public spaces in purple to celebrate the 19th Amendment's ratification centennial. On February 9, 1920, New Jersey ratified the 19th Amendment, confirming women's right to vote. We ask you to illuminate your public spaces in purple, a suffrage color, for at least the week of February 10.

Please share your participation on social media using the hashtag #NJWomenVote and #NJLM.

In addition, the WIMG committee requests that municipalities consider [adopting this sample resolution](#) celebrating the centennial. New Jersey was the 29th of the original 36 states to ratify the 19th Amendment, ensuring it became a law. New Jersey was also home to suffragists including Alice Paul, who founded the National Woman's Party in 1916. Her Mt. Laurel home, Paulsdale, is a National Historic Landmark.

The WIMG Committee consists of **all** elected and appointed women mayors and council members in New Jersey. They encourage the active involvement and full participation of women in municipal government. Efforts include professional development, networking seminars, and other programs.

NJLM is a partner organization with NJ Women Vote, a group marking the centennial of women's suffrage and looking at the role of New Jersey women in the historic movement and today's government. NJ Women Vote is part of Discover NJ History.

Visit www.discovernjhistory.org for more information.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x112.

c. NJBIA Opens New Good Neighbor Nominations

NJBIA and *New Jersey Business* magazine have opened nominations for the **2020 New Good Neighbor Awards**, celebrating economic development projects throughout the Garden State. Municipalities can enter projects as a great way to highlight development that has added to your community. For information go to the [NJBIA website](#).

Questions can be directed to NJBIA at 973-852-6230.

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