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December 21, 2018

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

This will be the last Weekly Round-Up for 2018. We'll be back on Friday, January 4, 2019. In the meanwhile, the League will advise you through either a Daily Update or Urgent Alert of any emergent matters. Happy Holidays!

I. State Issues

a. Recreational Cannabis for Adults is on hold for 2018

Recreational Cannabis for adults is on hold for 2018, but seems inevitable at some point in 2019.

To keep officials informed and up-to-date, the League has posted municipal resources on [our Cannabis Legalization web page](#). The League continues to work on research for you to reference regarding New Jersey's efforts, as well as the experiences of other states.

Visit the [page](#) for Newsflash information, links to useful sites, and unique League insights, reports, and research from the NJLM Cannabis Task Force.

Contact: Michael F. Cerra, Assistant Executive Director, mcerra@njslom.org, 609-695-3481 x120.

b. Legislators Move One Step Closer to Passing Preemptive Vegetation Management Bill

On Monday, the State Assembly voted 70-1 (with 4 not voting and 5 abstentions) to

approve [A-2558](#), known as the “Vegetation Management Response Act.” The League opposed this bill as it would give electric utility companies complete discretion to clear, move, cut, or destroy vegetation growing in, near, or adjacent to the right of way and without input from municipal officials. While we appreciate the sponsors’ response to the recent storms which left hundreds in the state without power, A-2558 takes too broad of an approach.

The Senate companion bill, [S-2505](#) was amended on the floor in order to match the Assembly bill before it is presented to the Governor for his action. This sets up a potential Senate floor vote on Thursday, January 31.

We urge our members to reach out to their Senators to express the concerns with the bill. Your legislator’s contact information can be found using the [state’s website](#) which breaks this information down by municipality. And, for more information on the implication of A-2558/S-2505 please see our daily alert from [December 14](#).

Contact: Frank Marshall, Esq., League Staff Attorney, FMarshall@njslom.org, 609-695-3481 x137.

c. Bill Allows Grocery Stores to Sell Alcoholic Beverages Without Local Approval

On Monday, the Assembly approved [A-4700](#). The vote was 53-24, with one abstention.

The bill, which aims to encourage supermarkets and grocery stores to better serve the residents of ‘food desert’ communities, currently includes a provision that would allow those food retailers *to sell alcoholic beverages, for off-site consumption, without consulting local officials, entrusted to protect the public’s rights and interests.*

The bill would give food stores that locate in “food deserts” State tax benefits that would equal local property taxes on the property. The bill also allows the State’s Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) to award ‘special retail distribution permits’ to the stores, without the approval of the local governing body.

The League welcomes initiatives that seek to address hunger in our State. We would support efforts to make healthy, nutritious food available to all New Jerseyans. But we have to question the relationship between that goal and the increased availability of alcoholic beverages. And we must oppose any initiative that gives local elected officials no discretion on the matter, while giving that discretion to private businesses, subject only to the profit motive, with no responsibility for the welfare of our citizens.

We must also worry about the possibility that this provision could serve as a precedent for future efforts to circumvent local authority, regarding the increased availability of alcoholic beverages in other municipalities, all around our State.

We hope to meet with the sponsor to discuss the bill’s deficiency, prior to any action in the Senate. In the meantime, please contact your State Senator to express the importance of local control over the sale of alcoholic beverages in New Jersey municipalities. Urge your Senator to oppose A-4700, in its current form.

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

d. Bill to Boost Code Blue Homeless Programs Goes to Governor

Passed by both Houses of the Legislature – the State Senate acted on Monday – [A-4177/S-2737](#) – has reached the Governor’s desk. The League supports this bill, which authorizes the use of county homeless trust funds to support Code Blue programs. As Winter officially begins today, we urge Governor Murphy to endorse this legislation, as soon as possible.

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

e. Local Finance Board Proposes New Authority and Fire District Budget Rules

Earlier this week the Local Finance Board published [proposed amendments to N.J.A.C. 5:31](#) and various new rules pertaining to the budgeting and reporting requirements of authorities and fire districts. Of particular note are proposed regulations implementing P.L. 2017 c.206 (the November fire district election law) and P.L. 2017 c.290 (the regional sewerage authority cap law).

The League will be working alongside our affiliate groups to review these new proposals in order to submit comments and provide more information to our members. You may wish to review the proposed changes yourself to understand the impact it may have on your municipality. You may also wish to submit your own comments but we urge you to share with the League any areas of the proposal which you feel should be supported or should be clarified so that we may incorporate it into our comments. Comments are due by February 15, 2019.

Contact:

- Frank Marshall, Esq., League Staff Attorney, FMarshall@njslom.org, 609-695-3481, x137.
- Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, LBuckelew@njslon.org, 609-695-3481, x112.

II. Federal Issue

a. Partial Federal Shut-Down Looms

Two weeks ago, as we reported, Congress and the President gave themselves a fortnight to work out a compromise to keep several federal agencies, offices and programs open and active, at least into early next year. That deadline will expire at midnight tonight (Friday, December 21).

Three quarters of the government are funded through September, 2019. Seven spending bills, however, still need action. These are the funding authorizations for the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department, the Interior Department, the State Department, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and other agencies and offices.

Yesterday, an expected bipartisan agreement for a short term funding extension was

discarded and instead the House approved a spending plan that includes \$5 billion for a border wall along the southern border. The House spending plan is not expected to meet the needed 60 votes in the Senate and the prospect of a partial shutdown appears likely.

Essential employees, such as those involved in Homeland Security, would remain on the job, with their wages withheld, pending authorization. Activities supported by multi-year funding, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund, would also continue to operate. Other employees would be placed on unpaid leave, and the services they provide would be suspended.

Democrat staffers of the Senate Appropriations Committee estimate that 420,000 federal employees will remain on the job, without pay. 380,000, including most employees of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Park Service and NASA, would be furloughed.

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

III. League Conference Follow Up

a. Do Not Forget to Claim Your CEU's from the 2018 NJLM Annual Conference!

Attention Municipal Officials! Do Not Forget to Claim Your CEU's from the 2018 NJLM Annual Conference! Please go to [our website](#) to claim your credits.

b. The Conference App is Still Available!

Misplaced your printed Session or Exhibitor Program Guide? The app can still be [downloaded](#) in your app store to reference session details or view contact information for participating consultants and exhibitors. The app will be available for download through the end of this calendar year and remains available for accessing on your device as long as it is installed.

c. Exhibits at the Annual Conference

Don't forget to follow up with the exhibitors you met during the Annual Conference! They're available to answer your questions and provide solutions to your town's issues. The full listing with contact information is available in the [Exhibitor's Program](#), on the [interactive floor plan](#) and the [conference app](#).

IV. Also of Interest

a. League Annual Survey

As 2018 comes to a close, we here at the League would like to know what you thought about our services provided throughout the year. Please forward this email to your municipal staff, administration, elected and appointed officials so they can complete our

short [online survey](#).

b. Calling all Mayors! 1st Annual NJ Local Government Week

Celebrate your municipality and showcase its beauty! Let residents know about your municipal facilities and careers, and highlight the services that their local government provides on a daily basis by participating in NJ Local Government Week April 7-13, 2019.

The League invites you to join in with municipalities across the Garden State April 7-13, 2019, to engage citizens while celebrating the work of local government. Through NJ Local Government Week, the League hopes to bring awareness to the role local government plays in achieving the best life for communities. Invite your schools, civic groups, businesses, and media to NJ Local Government Week activities for citizens of all ages.

How Can You Celebrate? Visit the League's website for ideas on celebrating in your municipality; including a "how to" packet with ideas ranging from basic, no cost activities to some that are more complex. Be sure to tag your social media posts with #njlocalgovt, and utilize the NJ Local Government Week logo that the League has provided by downloading from the League website.

[Visit the League website for tips](#), suggestions and a logo created to help promote your events.



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