

Dear Township Officials:

Please find below information pertaining to several legislative matters.

BUDGET BILL

The Senate is expected to release a substitute version of the budget bill (HB 1) by the end of this week. The OTA did give testimony on the bill before the Senate Finance & Financial Institution Committee last week and submitted two amendments, via Senator Schuler, for consideration of inclusion in the Senate substitute version. The amendments we submitted would: (1) eliminate the collective bargaining language for full-time, paid township fire departments in townships with a population under 5,000 in the unincorporated territory; and (2) state that any township that is offering health care or reimbursing for health care expenses would not be required to offer a section 125 (IRS) cafeteria plan for health care. Rumor around the Statehouse is that the TPP reimbursement language may not be included in the Senate version of the budget bill, due to the \$11.2 million price tag and the financial crisis that the state is facing. Rumors are just that, rumors, and we will let you know what is included or not included in the budget as soon as possible once the Senate version is released.

INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE

HB 194 HOUSEHOLD SEWAGE (Dolan) Regarding the operation of certain provisions of the Household and Small Flow On-Site Sewage Treatment Systems Law and that enacted temporary provisions regarding that Law by extending the termination of the suspension and temporary law from July 1, 2009, to December 31, 2009, and to declare an emergency. Am. 120.01, 120.02, and 120.05 This bill was introduced to extend the current rules past the current deadline of July 1, 2009. This will give the general assembly six more months to pass alternative HSTS rules and regulations.

OPERS

At the OPERS Board meeting last Wednesday, the Board authorized the legislative director at OPERS to pursue legislation that would increase the monthly contribution from \$250 to \$1000. The Ohio Township Association recognizes this would impact nearly all township trustees and several hundred fiscal officers. We will be meeting with OPERS shortly to discuss this matter and other potential OPERS changes that will impact township officials and employees. If you have concerns with this proposal, please share your thoughts with us and we will be happy to pass along your comments to OPERS.

FORCE ACCOUNTS

The OTA met with the Ohio Contractors Association, the County Engineers Association, the Ohio Farm Bureau and Senators Gillmor and Buehrer this week to discuss possible changes to the force account law. The Ohio County Engineers Association has proposed a 70% increase in the force account limits due to inflation over the last six years and a 3% price indexing every year thereafter. The OTA supports this request. The Contractors Association has come back with an alternative proposal which is still be evaluating. All parties will be reconvening in a few weeks to further discuss the issue.

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