



Legislative Report

TOI to Advance
Legislative Proposals

THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE of the Township Officials of Illinois met recently to approve the TOI 2010 legislative agenda. Staff reviewed nearly 10 issues that were raised by membership and the committee approved the drafting and introduction of two or three proposals. It was generally decided to narrow TOI's proactive agenda this year due to the fact that we will be playing defense on a number of fronts and also due to the fact that the General Assembly is not likely to be considering much more than emergency issues during this election year.

TOI will be introducing a bill that responds to a recent McHenry County case ruling against the ability of a highway commissioner to adopt ordinances governing his local roads. The proposal would remove the ambiguity this case has created.

And TOI will be re-introducing House Bill 476, which changes the manner that motor fuel tax money is distributed to townships. Current law requires a levy of at least .08 cents to receive *any* MFT money. TOI's proposal will allow all townships to receive a prorated share of the proceeds based on their tax rate. That bill has twice passed the house, but has failed in the Senate. Hopefully, the third time is the charm there this year. And we will be working with some Chicago law firms to draft legislation seeking clarification on purchase or construction of township buildings using bond funds.

But defense will be the motto for TOI this spring. Legislation placing onerous regulations on township cemeteries could be lurking, even though we were successful in gaining an exemption from the proposal during the fall veto session. A bill that moves up the date of the term of township assessors has already been introduced. Both of these proposals are in response to media accounts of malfeasance on the part of just one or two public officials, yet cast a net over the entire state. The December airings of one-sided accounts of township government on ABC television in Chicago will also likely spur legislators to jump on the bashing bandwagon with more anti-township laws.

Legislators are just now returning to Springfield following the February 2 primary election. But action is expected to get fast and furious as the House and Senate race toward a May 7 adjournment deadline. With a budget deficit nearing \$12 billion, there are a lot of tough decisions that must be made this year. And November's statewide election will not make those decisions any easier.

From the good news front! Gov. Pat Quinn recently signed into law House Bill 644, initiated by TOI, that will allow the cutoff of water to households delinquent in payment of township sewer service charges. Thanks to our sponsors, Rep. Pat Verschoore and Sen. Bill Haine!

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