REVENUE AND TAXATION POLICY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 12, 2018
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Hyatt Regency Long Beach, 200 South Pine Street, Long Beach

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Public Comment

III. Annual Conference Resolutions
Resolution No. 1: Local Municipal Authority, Control, and Revenue (Attachment A) Action
Speaker: John Mirisch, Vice Mayor, Beverly Hills

IV. Update on City Manager Sales Tax Working Group Discussion (PowerPoint)

V. Legislative Update

VI. Adjourn

2019 Policy Committee Appointments

REMINDER: The 2018 policy committee appointments will end at the close of the Annual Conference; appointments for 2019 can be requested thereafter. Members seeking appointments for 2019 are urged to contact their incoming department, division, or affiliate president immediately following the Annual Conference to request reappointment. A presidential appointment from the League’s incoming president may also be requested, although members are encouraged to first exhaust appointment opportunities through their division or department presidents. These requests should be sent c/o Meg Desmond, 1400 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 or via e-mail: mdesmond@cacities.org. Please include a brief bio. If you have questions regarding the appointment process, please call (916) 658-8224, send an e-mail to mdesmond@cacities.org.

Brown Act Reminder: The League of California Cities’ Board of Directors has a policy of complying with the spirit of open meeting laws. Generally, off-agenda items may be taken up only if:
1) Two-thirds of the policy committee members find a need for immediate action exists and the need to take action came to the attention of the policy committee after the agenda was prepared (Note: If fewer than two-thirds of policy committee members are present, taking up an off-agenda item requires a unanimous vote); or
2) A majority of the policy committee finds an emergency (for example: work stoppage or disaster) exists.

A majority of a city council may not, consistent with the Brown Act, discuss specific substantive issues among themselves at League meetings. Any such discussion is subject to the Brown Act and must occur in a meeting that complies with its requirements.
1. RESOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES CALLING UPON THE LEAGUE TO RESPOND TO THE INCREASING VULNERABILITIES TO LOCAL MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY, CONTROL AND REVENUE AND EXPLORE THE PREPARATION OF A BALLOT MEASURE AND/OR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT THAT WOULD FURTHER STRENGTHEN LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITY

Source: City of Beverly Hills
Concurrence of five or more cities/city officials
Cities: Duarte; Oceanside
City Officials: Sho Tay, Mayor, Arcadia; Emily Gabel-Luddy, Mayor, Burbank; Steven Scharf, Council Member, Cupertino; Alan Wapner, Mayor pro Tem, Ontario; Lydia Kou, Council Member, Palo Alto; Bill Brand, Mayor, Redondo Beach; David Terrazas, Mayor, Santa Cruz; Michael Goldman, Council Member, Sunnyvale; Patrick Furey, Mayor, Torrance; Lauren Meister, Council Member, West Hollywood
Referred to: Governance, Transparency & Labor Relations; Housing, Community & Economic Development; Revenue and Taxation; and Transportation, Communication & Public Works Policy Committees

WHEREAS, the State of California is comprised of diverse communities that are home to persons of differing backgrounds, needs, and aspirations; yet united by the vision that the most accessible, responsive, effective, and transparent form of democratic government is found at the local level and in their own communities; and

WHEREAS, subsidiarity is the principle that democratic decisions are best made at the most local level best suited to address the needs of the People, and suggests that local governments should be allowed to find solutions at the local level before the California Legislature imposes uniform and overreaching measures throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, the California Constitution recognizes that local self-government is the cornerstone of democracy by empowering cities to enact local laws and policies designed to protect the local public health, safety and welfare of their residents and govern the municipal affairs of charter cities; and

WHEREAS, over recent years there have been an increasing number of measures introduced within the Legislature or proposed for the state ballot, often sponsored by powerful interest groups and corporations, aimed at undermining the authority, control and revenue options for local governments and their residents; and

WHEREAS, powerful interest groups and corporations are willing to spend millions in political contributions to legislators to advance legislation, or to hire paid signature gatherers to qualify deceptive ballot proposals attempting to overrule or silence the voices of local residents and their democratically-elected local governments affected by their proposed policies; and

WHEREAS, powerful interest groups and corporations propose and advance such measures because they view local democracy as an obstacle that disrupts the efficiency of
implementing corporate plans and increasing profits and therefore object when local residents—either through their elected city councils, boards of supervisors, special district boards, or by action of local voters—enact local ordinances and policies tailored to fit the needs of their individual communities; and

WHEREAS, public polling repeatedly demonstrates that local residents and voters have the highest levels of confidence in levels of government that are closest to the people, and thus would be likely to strongly support a ballot measure that would further strengthen the ability of communities to govern themselves without micromanagement from the state or having their authority undermined by deep-pocketed and powerful interests and corporations.

RESOLVED that the League of California Cities should assess the increasing vulnerabilities to local authority, control and revenue and explore the preparation of a ballot measure and/or constitutional amendment that would give the state’s voters an opportunity to further strengthen local authority and preserve the role of local democracy to best preserve their local quality of life.
Background Information on Resolution No. 1

Source: City of Beverly Hills

Background:
The relationship between the state and cities functions best as a partnership where major policy issues are approached by the state with careful consideration of the varied conditions among the state’s 482 cities and 58 counties. There should be an appreciation of the importance of retaining local flexibility to tailor policies to reflect the needs and circumstances of the local community. Still, cities have had to respond to state legislation that undermines the principle of “local control” over important issues such as land use, housing, finance, infrastructure, elections, labor relations and other issues directly affecting cities.

Alexis de Tocqueville’s “Democracy in America” examined the operation of the principle of subsidiarity in the early 19th century. Subsidiarity is an organizing principle that states matters should be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority. Tocqueville wrote that “Decentralization has not only an administrative value, but also a civic dimension, since it increases the opportunities for citizens to take interest in public affairs; it makes them get accustomed to using freedom.” Tocqueville’s works were first published in 1835 with a second volume published in 1840. The United States had a population of just 17 million people in 1840, less than 50% of the population of California today and yet there was value found in decentralization.

Another consideration is to examine how the European Union (“EU”) operates. There are two prime guiding principles for the EU. The first is principle of conferral, which states that the EU should act only within the limits of the competences conferred on it by the treaties. The second, which is relevant to this resolution, is the principle of subsidiarity, which states that the EU should act only where an objective cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states acting alone. Sacramento should operate in a similar manner and only govern when objectives need to be achieved at a much larger level than a local government.

For years, Governor Jerry Brown himself has spoken on the principle of “subsidiarity.” Governor Brown has asserted for numerous years that local officials should have the flexibility to act without micromanagement from Sacramento.

Legislation introduced in both 2017 and 2018 by the state legislature has continually threatened local control in flagrant opposition to the principle of subsidiarity. This has included, but not been limited to, Senate Bill 649 (Hueso) Wireless Telecommunications Facilities (“SB 649”) in 2017; AB 252 (Ridley-Thomas) Local government: taxation: prohibition: video streaming services (“AB 252”) in 2017; and Senate Bill 827 (Wiener) Planning and Zoning: Transit-Rich Housing Bonus (“SB 827”) in 2018.

SB 649 would have applied to all telecommunications providers and the equipment they use, including “micro-wireless,” “small cell,” and “macro-towers,” as well as a range of video and cable services. The bill would have allowed the use of “small cell” wireless
antennas and related equipment without a local discretionary permit in all zoning districts as a use by-right, subject only to an administrative permit. Additionally, SB 649 provided a de facto CEQA exemption for the installation of such facilities and precluded consideration by the public for the aesthetic, nuisance, and environmental impacts of these facilities. SB 649 would have also removed the ability for cities to obtain fair and reasonable compensation when authorizing the use of public property and rights of way from a “for profit” company for this type of use.

SB 649 passed out of the State Assembly by a vote of 46-16-17 and out of the State Senate by a vote of 22-10-8 despite over 300 cities and 47 counties in California providing letters of opposition. Ultimately, Governor Brown vetoed the bill as he believed “that the interest which localities have in managing rights of way requires a more balanced solution than the one achieved in this bill.” It is strongly believed that the issue of wireless telecommunications facilities is not over and it is anticipated that legislation will be introduced on this topic in January 2019.

Another example of an incursion into local control was AB 252, which would have prohibited any tax on the sale or use of video streaming services, including sales and use taxes and utility user taxes. Over the last two decades, voters in 107 cities and 3 counties have adopted measures to modernize their Utility User Tax (“UUT”) ordinances. Of these jurisdictions, 87 cities and 1 county approved ordinances to allow a UUT on video providers. Prior to its first Committee hearing, AB 252 received opposition letters from 37 cities, the League of California Cities, South Bay Council of Governments, California Contract Cities Association, and nine other organizations. This bill failed in the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee 8-0-2, which the author of the Committee chaired.

More recently, SB 827 would have overridden local control on housing development that was within ½ mile of a major transit stop or ¼ mile from a high-quality bus corridor as defined by the legislation with some limitations. On April 17, 2018, SB 827 failed in the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee 4-6-3 but was granted reconsideration. State legislators have indicated they will continue to introduce legislation that will override local zoning ordinances for the development of affordable housing in conjunction with mixed use and/or luxury condominium/apartment housing.

These are just three examples of the increasing attempts by Sacramento to supersede local control. Presently, there are discussions occurring in Sacramento to ban cities from creating their own municipal broadband or to prohibit local ordinances over the regulation of shared mobility devices such as dockless electric scooters. These decisions should remain with each individual jurisdiction to decide based on the uniqueness of their community and the constituents that live in each city.

Often fueled by the actions of special interest groups, Sacramento is continually attempting to overreach their authority with various incursions on local control. The desire in Sacramento to strip communities of their ability to make decisions over issues which should remain at the local level seems to intensify each state legislative cycle. Increasingly, legislation is being introduced with a “one-size-fits-all” approach which is detrimental in a
state with over 40 million residents that have extremely diverse communities from the
desert to the sea, from the southern to the northern borders.

Loren King in the book “Cities, Subsidiarity and Federalism” states, “Decisions should be
made at the lowest feasible scale possible”. The proposed resolution directs the League of
California Cities to assess the increasing vulnerabilities to local authority, control and
revenue. It also directs the League of California Cities to explore the preparation of a ballot
measure and/or constitutional amendment which would aim to ensure that decisions are
made as close to home as possible.

Local government, when done right, is the best form of democracy precisely because it is
closest to home. A ballot measure and/or constitutional amendment would provide the
state’s voters an opportunity to further strengthen local authority and maintain the role of
local democracy to best preserve their local quality of life while still leaving the appropriate
issues at the county, regional or state legislature depending on the topic. Any ballot
measure and/or constitutional amendment should institutionalize the principle of
subsidiarity, while encouraging inclusive regional cooperation that recognizes the diversity
of California’s many individual communities. The time has come to allow the residents of
California’s voters to decide if they prefer top down governance from Sacramento or
bottom up governing from their own locally elected officials.
League of California Cities Staff Analysis on Resolution No. 1

Staff: Dan Carrigg, Johnnie Pina
Committees: Governance, Transparency and Labor Relations
Housing, Community & Economic Development
Revenue & Taxation
Transportation, Communication and Public Works

Summary:
This Resolution states that the League of California Cities should assess the vulnerabilities to local authority, control and revenue and explore the preparation of a ballot measure and or constitutional amendment that would give the state’s voters an opportunity to further strengthen local authority and preserve the role of local democracy.

Background:
The City of Beverly Hills is sponsoring this resolution in reaction to their concerns over measures coming from the Legislature and the initiative process attempting to roll back local control and hinder cities from providing optimal services to their residents.

As examples, the city cites the 2017-2018 legislative cycle, the Legislature introduced bills such as Senate Bill 649 (Hueso) Wireless Telecommunications Facilities, and AB 252 (Ridley-Thomas) proposing to prohibit taxes on video streaming services, and more recently Senate Bill 827 (Wiener) Planning and Zoning: Transit-Rich Housing. SB 649 was vetoed by the Governor and SB 827 died in policy committee, however if these measures had been signed into law they would have impinged on the ability of a local government to be responsive to the needs of their constituents.

The city maintains that “local government, when done right, is the best form of democracy precisely because it is closest to home. A ballot measure and/or constitutional amendment would provide the state’s voters an opportunity to further strengthen local authority and maintain the role of local democracy to best preserve their local quality of life while still leaving the appropriate issues at the county, regional or state legislature depending on the topic.”

Fiscal Impact:
By requesting the League to “assess” vulnerabilities and “explore” the preparation of a ballot measure that would further protect local authority, there are no proposals to be quantified. But it is presumed that the League would not pursue a measure that did not have positive impacts of further protecting local authority.

For the League as an organization, however, the fiscal impact of sponsoring a ballot measure can be very expensive. It can take several million dollars to qualify a measure via signature gathering, and much more to fund an effective campaign and overcome organized opposition.

Comments:
1) Ballot measure advocacy is a settled aspect of California’s political process. This year’s November ballot is an example of that, with proposals ranging from dividing California
into three states, restoring rent control, repealing transportation funding, to funding housing and water bonds. Three other measures are not on the November ballot after their sponsors spent millions gathering signatures to qualify measures, then leveraged last-minute legislative deals in exchange for pulling them from the ballot.

2) Most major stakeholder organizations in Sacramento have realized that they cannot rely on legislative advocacy alone to protect their interests, but must develop and maintain the capacity to protect their interests in the ballot process as well.

3) The League has been engaged in ballot advocacy for nearly 20 years. In the early 2000’s, city officials were angered by repeated state raids of local revenues. These concerns led to the League—for the first time in its then 100-year history—developing a ballot advocacy infrastructure that included forming and fundraising for an issues political action committee (PAC), establishing a network of regional managers, and building a coalition with other organizations that ultimately led to the passage of Prop. 1A of 2004. Over the years, the League’s successful campaigns include the passage of Proposition 1A and Proposition 99 and the defeat of Propositions 90 and 98.

   As a result of the passage of Prop 1A, local government revenues that otherwise would have been raided by the state legislature were kept in local coffers. This resulted in increased funding for public safety, health, libraries, parks and other locally delivered services. Proposition 1A PASSED WITH 83.7% OF THE VOTE.

b. No on Proposition 90 (2006)
   Prop. 90 was a well-financed special interest-backed initiative that sought to eliminate most of local governments’ land use decision making authority. Led by the League, the opposition educated voters on how this measure’s far reaching provisions would have cost taxpayers billions of dollars by driving up the cost of infrastructure projects, prevented voters and state and local agencies from enacting environmental protections, jeopardized public safety services and more. Proposition 90 FAILED WITH 52.4% OF THE VOTERS VOTING NO.

c. No on Proposition 98 Yes on Proposition 99 (2008)
   Given the hidden agendas within Prop 98, our message was not always an easy one to communicate to the electorate. The No on 98/ Yes on 99 campaign was able to educate voters on the important differences between both measures. As a result, important eminent domain reforms were enacted and both land use decision making and rent control were preserved within our communities. Proposition 98 FAILED WITH 61.6% OF THE VOTERS VOTING NO. Proposition 99 PASSED BY 61% OF THE VOTE.

d. Yes on Proposition 22 (2010)
   As a result of the passage, local governments have been able to pay for infrastructure investment, create local jobs and avoid devastating cuts in our communities. Proposition 22 APPROVED BY 60.7% OF VOTERS.
4) While the League has been able to recently defeat several major legislative proposals aimed and undermining local authority, and avoid a battle over the Business Roundtable’s measure in November due to the “soda tax” deal, the threats to local authority and revenue remain a constant concern. Other interest groups may be emboldened by some of the recent “deals” cut by ballot proponents and seek to implement similar strategies for the 2020 ballot. The next Governor may also have different philosophies then Governor Jerry Brown on “subsidiarity.”

5) The League’s President opted to send this resolution to four policy committees for several reasons: (a) the recent major threats to local control covered broad policy areas: telecom, land use, contracting, and revenue; and (b) having this issue vetted broadly within the League policy process will provide a better assessment of the depth of concern for the vulnerability to local control within the membership.

6) If the membership chooses to approve this measure, it is strongly advisable to retain continued flexibility for the League to “assess” vulnerabilities and “explore” options. Any ballot initiative consideration must be approached very carefully by the organization. It is a difficult and very expensive endeavor that can have additional political ramifications. For 120 years the League’s core mission has been to protect local control - and it has gone to the ballot successfully before to do so -- but any such effort must be approached thoughtfully, prudently and cautiously.

**Existing League Policy:**
Related to this Resolution, existing policy provides:

- The League of California Cities’ Mission Statement is, “To expand and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy. To enhance the quality of life for all Californians”
- The League of California Cities’ Summary of Existing Policy and Guidelines states, “We Believe
  - Local self-governance is the cornerstone of democracy.
  - Our strength lies in the unity of our diverse communities of interest.
  - In the involvement of all stakeholders in establishing goals and in solving problems.
  - In conducting the business of government with openness, respect, and civility.
  - The spirit of public service is what builds communities.
  - Open decision-making that is of the highest ethical standards honors the public trust.
  - Cities are the economic engine of California.
  - The vitality of cities is dependent upon their fiscal stability and local autonomy.
  - The active participation of all city officials increases the League’s effectiveness.
  - Focused advocacy and lobbying is most effective through partnerships and collaboration.
  - Well-informed city officials mean responsive, visionary leadership, and effective and efficient city operations.”
- Click here to view the Summary of Existing Policy and Guiding Principles 2018.
Support:
The following letters of concurrence were received: Steven Scharf, Cupertino City Council Member; Michael S. Goldman, Sunnyvale City Council; Lydia Kou, Palo Alto City Council Member; David Terrazas, Mayor of Santa Cruz; Peter Weiss, Mayor of Oceanside; Alan D. Wapner, Mayor pro Tem of Ontario; Patrick Furey, Mayor of Torrance; Lauren Meister, West Hollywood Council Member; Liz Reilly, Duarte Mayor Pro Tem; Bill Brand, Mayor of Redondo Beach; Sho Tay, Mayor of Arcadia; Emily Gabel-Luddy, Mayor of Burbank.