



Municipal Advocacy Goals

2015-2016

On December 11, 2014, municipal officials from across North Carolina gathered to approve the League's Municipal Advocacy Goals for the 2015-16 biennium. These top legislative and regulatory priorities for the state's municipalities are the result of a year-long, member driven process involving hundreds of municipal officials. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these Municipal Advocacy Goals, please contact any of the municipal officials or League staff listed within this document. We welcome the opportunity to work with you regarding these priorities.

This League endorses and supports the current National Municipal Policy and will actively support NLC efforts with respect to federal legislation and issues unless there is a clear conflict with the adopted policies of this League.

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Good government. Great hometowns.

Build Safe & Prosperous Cities and Towns

- Seek legislation allowing the people to vote on an amendment to the North Carolina constitution establishing Home Rule authority for municipal governments, following the belief that the government closest to the people governs best.
- Seek legislation to strengthen the law regarding municipal decision-making authority of public enterprise service provisions beyond municipal limits and ensure the existing municipal public enterprise service system is given deference in order to support orderly growth.
- Support measures which maximize the ability of local governments to provide and manage high-quality services, including utilities and public enterprises, to meet the needs of the community, and oppose legislation that weakens or removes local control over public assets.
- Seek legislation to create a cooperative municipal-county planning framework for growth that allows for public participation, orderly development on the urbanizing edges of municipalities, and a streamlined dispute resolution process.
- Support legislation authorizing new, fair, transparent and nonpartisan methods of drawing legislative and congressional districts.
- Seek legislation to reestablish authority for city-initiated annexation of “doughnut holes,” areas of land that are completely surrounded by municipal territory, and categories of right-of-way that have been accepted for maintenance by either a city or the NCDOT and in which there are no registered voters.
- Seek legislation that allows aesthetic-based design standards for residences and commercial properties in and adjacent to existing neighborhoods, including designated historic districts, as well as for all structures when based on public safety.

Preserve Municipalities’ Fiscal Health

- Seek legislation to modernize and enhance the existing local tax system by:
 - Giving municipalities the authority to levy a sales tax that applies within their corporate limits and is solely a municipal revenue;
 - Expanding the sales tax base to include more services, provided that any accompanying change in the local sales tax rate includes a perpetual hold harmless provision for individual cities and towns;
 - Allowing all municipalities to adopt occupancy taxes and use revenues from those taxes to fund municipal service and infrastructure costs in order to support travel and tourism;
 - Providing all municipalities with additional local option tax revenue sources, including to replace the significant revenue lost through elimination of the local privilege license tax; and
 - Providing a uniform state rate of tax on sales by internet-based retailers to facilitate and encourage passage of federal marketplace fairness legislation, with a reasonable method of distribution from the state to local government.
- Seek legislation providing municipalities with additional local option tax revenue sources to replace the significant revenue lost through elimination of the local privilege license tax.
- Seek legislation to alter the current statutes governing distribution of local sales taxes by:
 - Establishing alternative methods which counties may use to distribute sales tax revenues, including but not limited to, a combination of existing distribution formulas and/or new distribution formulas, including factors such as the location of the point of sale;
 - Requiring a one-year delay in implementation when a county changes its method of distributing sales tax revenue; and
 - Requiring a study of the impact of any change in sales tax distribution method, including input from all affected municipalities, before any such change could be implemented.

Promote Economic Growth and Vibrant Municipalities

- Support legislation providing the funding for state-level incentive programs necessary to keep North Carolina competitive in its efforts to bring additional jobs and economic development to local communities.
- Support legislation that provides municipalities with additional tools/incentives to encourage developers to undertake economic development projects in economically distressed or blighted areas of a city, such as land banks and other tools.
- Support legislation to establish a competitive film incentive program and preserve the state historic tax credits.
- Oppose legalization of internet sweepstakes operations; however, if internet sweepstakes operations are legalized, support legislation that would protect the land use decision-making authority and authorize municipalities to levy taxes on said operations.
- Seek legislation preventing municipalities from being additionally charged for services which are already funded through the payment of county property taxes.
- Support legislation which defends the fiscal integrity of the Local Government Employees' Retirement System and its defined benefit structure, promotes reasonable pension reforms that are prospective in nature, and meets the needs of local employees, employers, and retirees.
- Seek legislation to give municipalities the option to use electronic legal public notices in lieu of publication in a newspaper.
- Seek legislation to correct the constitutional issue within the annexation law requiring municipal construction of payment for water and sewer lines across private property all the way to the home or structure.

Strengthen Our Public Infrastructure

- Seek or support legislation to generate additional revenues to address growing transportation needs at the state and local level, and enable local governments to enter into alternative financing mechanisms to complete local transportation projects.
- Support legislation enabling municipalities to access a portion of the proceeds of any statewide transportation bonds.
- Oppose legislation that weakens or removes local control over public assets.
- Seek legislation to authorize a state bond to provide low-cost loans to local governments and authorities for infrastructure.
- Seek legislation to increase Clean Water Management Trust Fund appropriations and restore the fund's recurring appropriation.
- Seek legislation that will restore the dedicated funding source for the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund to maintain funding for land acquisition and development of municipal recreation facilities.
- Seek legislation to provide relief for municipal governments who are forced to pay the costs of municipal utility relocation related to NCDOT projects by doing the following: requiring non-municipal units of governments to pay the costs of utility relocations; raising the existing municipal population threshold for the requirement of reimbursement; and limiting reimbursement requirements to the widening of existing rights of way by NCDOT.

Create Transparent and Flexible Regulation

- Seek more open, transparent and flexible regulatory procedures that support solutions addressing nutrient impairment in waters based on current site-specific data and analysis, demonstrate use impairment, assign responsibility proportionate to the source of impairment, and equitably hold accountable all contributors to the impairment.
- Seek policies that provide flexibility when implementing programs guided by water quality standards adopted through the triennial review process.
- Seek administrative changes to water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure funding programs to prioritize public projects that: repair, rehabilitate, or replace existing failing infrastructure; reduce nonpoint source pollution, even when a permit condition requires the measures; protect or improve the quality of drinking water sources; assist systems in managing assets; contain a long-range planning components; incentivize innovative projects; or address impaired waters.
- Support legislation to create a legal framework that recognizes the rights of municipal government to allocations from navigable and non-navigable waterway resources in an amount adequate to meet the community's long-range water supply needs.
- Seek legislation that restores and clarifies municipalities' ability create stream, wetland, nutrient and buffer mitigation banks and provides methods and procedures for doing so.

Seek Common Sense Federal Action

- Seek clarification of the EPA's proposed definition of "waters of the United States" to address municipalities' concerns, including the following:
 - Exempting from jurisdictional waters human-made ditches.
 - Exempting from jurisdictional waters Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s).
- Support legislation allowing municipalities to collect the sales tax they are currently owed on purchases from Internet-based retailers.

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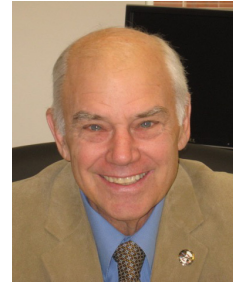
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