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Bulletin #08-02

Thursday, May 22, 2008

NCACC URGES REPEAL OF COURTHOUSE TELEPHONE SYSTEM FUNDING PROVISION

A House Appropriations subcommittee heard comments May 21 on a provision in the 2007-09 budget bill that shifts the responsibility of funding courthouse telephone systems from the state to counties. The provision was not supported by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and the Association's Board of Directors endorsed a repeal of the provision during its December 2007 meeting. The provision takes effect July 1, shifting an almost \$3.7 million annual statewide expense to counties (individual county impacts are available online at www.ncacc.org/documents/courttelephoneexp_0408.xls).

We urge county officials to contact their House members – particularly those who serve on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety – to request that the provision be repealed and that state funding for courthouse telephone systems be reinstated in the state budget this session.

Co-Chairs: Reps. Alice Bordsen (919-733-5820) and Jimmy Love (919-715-3026)

Vice Chairs: Reps. Joe Kiser (919-733-5782), Karen Ray (919-733-5741), Tim Spear (919-715-3029), Ronnie Sutton (919-715-0875) and Ray Warren (919-715-8361)

Members: Reps. Phillip Frye (919-733-5661), Melanie Goodwin (919-733-5823), Pat Hurley (919-733-5865), Carolyn Justus (919-733-5956), Annie Mobley (919-733-5780) and Tim Moore (919-733-4838)

It is our understanding that legislation is forthcoming in the Senate that would repeal the provision, and the Association will alert county officials to contact their senators and urge them to sign on as co-sponsors to the bill once it is filed and assigned a bill number.

BILLS WOULD DELAY \$2 TIPPING TAX BY SIX MONTHS

Companion bills have been introduced in the House ([H2541](#)) and Senate ([S1923](#)) that reflect the position of the NCACC Board of Directors to push back implementation of an additional \$2 per ton tipping tax at county landfills and transfer stations from July 1, 2008, to Jan. 1, 2009, in order to work out kinks in the system. If your county is among those experiencing implementation problems, contact the NCACC (Paul Meyer at 919-715-4369 or Anthony Allen at 919-715-1430).

LEGISLATION ATTACKING COUNTY PROPERTY TAX BASE LOOMS

The General Assembly's Revenue Laws Study Committee has endorsed a mandatory four-year property revaluation schedule for counties. The proposal is similar to provisions in [S1309](#), which passed the Senate last session, but would not enable a county to postpone its revaluation if that county's sales-assessment ratio is greater than .90. Several county boards of commissioners across the state have adopted resolutions opposing a mandatory four-year revaluation cycle.

Also being considered is a proposal to provide property tax breaks, equivalent to that of family farmers, for landowners whose property is used primarily to protect wildlife habitats (see [H1889](#) from 2007). This legislation will seek to extend the present-use value system to include property between 10 and 100 acres in size and be certified by the N.C. Wildlife Commission as having a sound management plan. This

proposal is a significant departure from the production-based use-value program, and will likely result in significant revenue losses to counties. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

NCACC, TAX OFFICIALS PUSH FOR DELAY OF CIRCUIT BREAKER PROGRAM

County tax professionals are seeking a one-year delay in the implementation of a circuit breaker program. [H1499](#), which was passed into law during the 2007 session, created a new property tax deferral program for older and disabled North Carolinians falling below certain income levels. The implementation of this program will require significant changes in the county tax offices, including new programming of tax office computers. Tax offices across the state are scrambling to meet the July 1, 2009, effective date, and many will likely not be prepared to accept applications from eligible taxpayers this fall. The NCACC encourages county officials to contact members of the House and Senate finance committees and ask that the effective date of the circuit breaker program be pushed back to July 1, 2010.

House Finance Committee Chairs: Reps. Paul Luebke (919-733-7663), Paul Gibson (919-715-3007), William Wainwright (919-733-5995) and Jennifer Weiss (919-715-3010)
Click [here](#) for full membership

Senate Finance Committee Chairs: Sens. Dan Clodfelter (919-715-8331), David Hoyle (919-733-5734) and John Kerr (919-733-5621)
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OWENS INTRODUCES BILL TO HONOR NCACC FOUNDING FATHER C.E. FOY

Rep. Bill Owens has introduced a joint resolution ([H2172](#)) honoring the memory of C.E. Foy, a former Craven County commissioner and the first president of the Association, and commending the Association on its centennial. Rep. Owens, a former Pasquotank County commissioner, served as the NCACC's 75th president during his term in 1991-92. Association staff is working with legislative leadership to have the resolution enacted in the House and Senate chambers on County Assembly Day, which will be held June 10 in Raleigh. We hope to fill the galleries of each chamber with county commissioners and officials to help celebrate this momentous occasion. More information on County Assembly Day and a registration form are available on the NCACC's Web site at www.ncacc.org/countyassemblyday.html.

BILLS OF INTEREST

The Association has created a section on its Web site to track bills of interest to county officials. Visit www.ncacc.org/legislation/about.html for updates on key legislation, including the bills listed below.

Bill: HB2138

Sponsors: Gibson (D69)

Title: DISAPPROVE COASTAL STORMWATER RULE

Summary: An Act to Disapprove a Rule to Manage Stormwater in Coastal Counties.

Status: 05/19/2008 – House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Position: Support

Comments: The NCACC's Board of Directors on May 14 adopted policy recommended by the Environment Steering Committee that seeks disapproval of proposed changes to the Coastal Stormwater Rules that affect 20 coastal counties as well as a legislative study of the impacts the rules will have in preparation of the 2009 long session. Coastal county officials have argued that the new rules would eliminate low-density development and imposes regulations modeled for high-density urban areas on the 20 counties covered under the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), most of which are rural in nature.

Bill: HB2314

Sponsors: Cole (D65)

Title: VOLUNTARY COUNTY PARTICIPATION/DOT.-AB

Summary: An Act to Make Changes to the Statutes Governing Voluntary Local Government Financial Participation in Department of Transportation Projects, as Recommended by the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee.

Status: 05/21/2008 – House Committee On Transportation

Comments: This bill codifies and expands on items that were included in S1513, which passed into law during the 2007 long session and gave counties authority to participate in the financing of roads. The Association has expressed to DOT officials its opposition to certain portions of this bill.

– NCACC Legislative Team