MEMO

To: Members of the House Local Government Committee

From: Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, PA Municipal League and PA State Association of Township Commissioners

Re: Support for Bills Scheduled for Committee Consideration on December 17, 2019

Date: December 16, 2019

On behalf of the PA Municipal League and PA State Association of Township Commissioners, I am writing in regards our position on bills slated for Committee consideration on December 17.

Senate Bills 690-692: Support – These bills, introduced by Senator Hutchinson, will save taxpayer dollars by increasing the bidding threshold when a municipality is selling real property. The property value triggering the advertising process is adjusted from $1,500 to $6,000. This increase represents an inflationary adjustment from the late 1970’s.

House Bill 2073: Support – This bill, introduced by Representative Moul, represents the comprehensive modernization of the First Class Township Code. It is the culmination of a several year project, led by the Local Government Commission. Both PML and PSATC support HB 2073.

In regards to the amendments offered:

Freeman Amendment A4336 – Support – this amendment reverts to language in the current Code regarding police officers holding office; and the requirement to obtain multiple bids on public construction projects. It also incorporates language from HB 1750 allowing newly elected commissioners to receive reimbursement for training received prior to being sworn in as commissioners.

Miller Amendment A4338 – Oppose – this amendment reverts to current language in the Code regarding the salary of township commissioners. We are opposed to the Miller amendment because the increases authorized in HB 2073 are optional and represent merely a cost of living adjustment for rates set in 1995. Township commissioners, like other elected municipal officials, dedicate many hours of time in their role as a local official. We argue that a cost of living increase is appropriate after 25 years. Further, HB 2073, requires each board of commissioners to make its own determination as to whether a salary increase is appropriate. If so, an ordinance must be adopted setting out the new rates. A current commissioner voting for an increase will not be able to receive that increase until he or she has won re-election in a subsequent term.

For the following reasons, we ask that you vote in favor of the Freeman Amendment and oppose the Miller Amendment.

Thank you for your consideration.