



122 West Washington Avenue  
Suite 300  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

608/267-2380  
800/991-5502  
Fax: 608/267-0645

E-mail: [league@lwm-info.org](mailto:league@lwm-info.org)  
[www.lwm-info.org](http://www.lwm-info.org)

To: Legislative Council Special Committee on Local Service Consolidation  
From: Curt Witynski, Assistant Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities  
Date: September 2, 2010  
Re: Special Committee Assignment/Recommended Legislative Changes to Pursue

As you contemplate what the Committee should focus on, we offer the following recommendations for your consideration. We agree with Chairperson Zepnick that from a political and practical viewpoint, the Special Committee should focus on the enactment of a few items of legislation allowing and encouraging regional delivery of governmental services and regional revenue sharing programs. To that end, the League of Wisconsin Municipalities urges you to consider the following proposals:

- 1. Make it Easier for Municipalities to Consolidate.** Enact legislation similar to **2009 AJR 65**, amending the Wisconsin constitution to create an exception to the uniformity clause that would allow a municipal governing body to establish different tax rates in recently consolidated parts of a community. Such a change would allow local governments to address the biggest stumbling block to consolidating two neighboring communities - tax rate disparity due to service level differences.
- 2. Allow Option of Combining Police and Fire Positions.** Enact legislation similar to **2009 AB 312**, allowing municipalities the option of combining their police and fire departments into a single protective services department. Under current law, municipalities are even prohibited from combining a few police and fire management and administrative positions.
- 3. Address Labor Relations.** Allow municipalities to consolidate service delivery with neighboring communities without having to collectively bargain the decision or the impact of the decision on employees.
- 4. Repeal Maintenance of Effort Requirement on Emergency Services Spending.** Enact legislation similar to **2009 AB 661**, eliminating a significant impediment to contracting with another local government for police and fire services.

**5. Provide a Cooperation Carrot by Converting the Comprehensive Planning Grants Program to a Cooperation and Collaboration Grant Program.** Since the deadline for adopting comprehensive plans has passed, use the \$2 million set aside for the planning grant program to award grants to communities that present innovative plans for cooperatively providing services on a regional basis.

**6. Organize, Manage, and Fund a Pilot Collaboration Effort Involving Local Government Web Services.** Establish a program in which the Division of Enterprise Technology in DOA assists a group of local governments to create a single Website providing citizens from multiple jurisdictions with seamless, cross-boundary web services. The pilot could be modeled after a successful program created by nine local governments in Washington called the [eCityGov Alliance](#), a Web based effort to improve citizen access to government services, such as building permits and park reservations.

**7. Revenue Sharing.** The League supports efforts to broaden municipal authority relating to revenue sharing and tax base sharing. While the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul tax base sharing program was mentioned at the Committee's first meeting, other models also exist. In Maine, for example, the legislatively created Kennebec Regional Development Authority involves 24 municipalities that engage in the sharing of property tax revenues generated by economic development that occurs in an industrial park located in one of the participating communities. For more information see the following paper: <http://www.doynelson.com/Regionalization.php>

Thanks for considering our comments. Please let me know if you have questions or need additional information about any of the items discussed above. Also, we may have additional suggestions and comments to make as the Committee's work proceeds.