

# Calling All Boroughs

## PSAB Applauds Introduction of Congressional Funding Bill for Local Governments

By **Chris Cap**, PSAB Deputy Executive Vice President

*U.S. Representative Paul Kanjorski of northeastern Pennsylvania recently introduced House Resolution 3007 - the Local Fiscal Assistance Act.*

**U**S. Representative Paul Kanjorski of northeastern Pennsylvania recently introduced House Resolution 3007 - the Local Fiscal Assistance Act. This well-intentioned proposal would provide \$30 billion a year to municipalities across the country for three years. The substance of the bill mirrors the federal General Revenue Sharing Program that was highly regarded by local governments across the country and expired in 1986 without Congressional action. Since that time, the reestablishment of this federal commitment has been a primary goal on PSAB's legislative priority list.

PSAB has actively lobbied Congress for decades to emphasize the immense value of this program, which provided a direct source of funding to all local governments throughout the nation. The program was initially created in 1972 during the Nixon administration, and it effectively created a grant program used by municipalities to meet numerous public needs such as police service, fire safety, infrastructure maintenance, recreation facilities, libraries and even general administration functions.

### **Why Borough Leaders are Interested**

H.R. 3007 has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for consideration and is being circulated to other House members for co-sponsorship. The bill will require significant support from local governments around the country if it has any hope of advancing to the President's desk for enactment. This legislation has already secured enthusiastic support from many borough governments



**CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENT KANJORSKI** commented that federal revenue sharing provided municipalities with a source of revenue for undertaking job-creating infrastructure projects and maintaining public safety networks



**A LOCAL EFFORT** PSAB President Robert "Doc" Orr challenges local elected and appointed officials to advocate for H.R. 3007 with their Congressional representative

around the Commonwealth, PSAB Executive Vice President Tom Klaum says.

"Our boroughs need a new revenue source that can help them manage their communities more effectively," he says. "We applaud Congressman Kanjorski's legislative efforts to promote parity amongst local governments. Rightfully, H.R. 3007 does not favor cities over small and medium sized municipalities. In its current draft form, this legislation provides a fair allocation formula that benefits all local governments."

#### **Kanjorski Advocates for Local Governments**

Congressman Kanjorski has had extensive discussions with municipal leaders in his legislative district which includes portions of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties plus all of Monroe, Columbia and Carbon Counties. The notion of renewing this federal commitment has increasingly drawn interest from borough governments as they seek new opportunities to defray

operating costs. Kanjorski's bill provides significant flexibility to local governments and would authorize expenditures that broadly qualify as ordinary maintenance or operating expenses.

"More than 30 years ago, as our country experienced another period of prolonged economic stress, we put in place a General Revenue Sharing grant program. Between 1972 and 1986, \$83 billion was transferred from the federal government under this program. This funding provided localities with a needed source of revenue for undertaking job-creating infrastructure projects and maintaining public safety networks" said Congressman Kanjorski.

He added: "By introducing general revenue sharing legislation, I aim to achieve the same goals by providing localities, including many in Pennsylvania, with a needed source of revenue for undertaking job-creating infrastructure projects and maintaining public safety networks. This legislation would be critical to

helping our localities that are facing serious budget problems as a result of current economic problems."

The proposal tasks the U.S. Treasury Department with making quarterly payments to local governments based on an allocation formula that resembles the federal General Revenue Sharing Program as it expired more than two decades ago. A Local Government Fiscal Trust Fund would be established, and the bill authorizes \$30 billion for three years. Funds would not be allocated to any state governments and would instead be disbursed directly to local governments. H.R. 3007 specifically provides that authorized priority expenditures by municipalities include public safety, environmental protection, health, recreation, libraries, social services for the poor or elderly, financial administration or other activities authorized by law.

#### **A Unifying Issue for All Boroughs**

"H.R. 3007 will have little chance of passing if all Pennsylvania

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members of Congress are not cosponsors to the bill. Our borough leaders across Pennsylvania must aggressively promote this bill before their Congressional member,” PSAB President Robert “Doc” Orr says.

“The provisions contained in H.R. 3007 would strongly benefit all boroughs and is long overdue. We need Congress to fully recognize the immense significance of local governments and their vital roles. In this economic downturn, local officials are, in some cases, being forced to reduce services, eliminate jobs or raise taxes on residents. This is a unifying issue for all boroughs, and the time for Congress to provide

a direct source of financial assistance to local governments is now!”

President Orr also emphasized the need for members to contact Senators Arlen Specter and Robert Casey to promote H.R. 3007. PSAB has prepared a sample resolution that may be forwarded to members of Congress and your local media outlets as a formal declaration of support for the legislation.

**A National Effort that Starts with You**

Local governments across the country are also in the process of lobbying their Congressional delegations to support the measure. Congressman Kanjorski made a valiant effort to attach this concept to the American Recovery

and Reinvestment Act through a proposed amendment; however, it did not have sufficient support from other legislators. His latest effort may involve future hearings before Congress which PSAB has committed to participating in on behalf of borough governments.

PSAB has drafted a sample resolution that is available on the Association website at [www.boroughs.org](http://www.boroughs.org) to magnify the need for this constructive legislation. Members may also contact Chris Cap, PSAB Deputy Executive Vice President, at 800-232-7722 ext. 43 or email [ccap@boroughs.org](mailto:ccap@boroughs.org) with any questions on the proposal. **(B)**



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come from excrement. The agency notes that also may be the reason that some water reuse projects fail, such as various toilet- to-tap programs, which propose to reclaim wastewater for drinking.

Water reuse is common in Hawaii since nearly all of the state’s drinking water supply is obtained from unconfined groundwater aquifers. Drinking water for the one million residents of Oahu Island in Hawaii is obtained from groundwater. In Oahu, treated wastewater is used to irrigate some agricultural lands and some of the 35 golf courses on the island. Therefore, protecting this groundwater from possible contamination is important.

Roger Babcock, Ph.D., associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Hawaii, is currently involved with a study on Hawaii’s Oahu Island to screen groundwater, wastewater, and reclaimed water for PPCPs. In addition to PPCP detection, the study also determines soil absorption characteristics of selected pharmaceutical compounds

and the fate and transport of PPCPs in recycled water during percolation through soil in field-test plots.

“What we are trying to do is figure out what the fate of these compounds is when they are discharged into the environment,” Babcock said. Currently, recycled water cannot be used over an aquifer and this was the catalyst for the study, Babcock said. “Recycled water is generally only approved for use in areas where it’s not over a drinking water supply, but there is a proposal for fairly large-scale reuse over a potable aquifer. This study is aimed at finding out if that’s okay,” he said. Results of the study so far indicate PPCPs were found in treated and untreated wastewater, but no PPCPs were detected in the groundwater samples taken.

**Unanswered Questions**

It will probably take many years to solve the mystery of PPCPs. Currently, more questions are generated than answers about the potential effects of PPCPs, but one thing is certain – detection of PPCPs does have an emotional impact on all levels of society.

Researchers have speculated that people have a far stronger reaction to the detection of PPCPs verses the detection of pesticides in the environment because ibuprofen and caffeine are drugs that the public uses. Now that we know these compounds are out there, the big question is – how much of an impact do PPCPs have on the environment and what do we do about it? **(B)**

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more than 10,000 miles of PA trails collected and verified before the end of 2010. To find out more about GPSing trails, contact Kent Taylor, a Western Pennsylvania Conservancy GIS specialist working with DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation and Conservation in Harrisburg. He can be reached at 717-787-4250 or [c-ketaylor@state.pa.us](mailto:c-ketaylor@state.pa.us). To locate a trail in your area, visit [ExplorePATrails.com](http://ExplorePATrails.com). **(B)**