



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF HENRICO

Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E.
County Manager

November 16, 2011

The Governor's Task Force for Local
Government Mandate Review
Dept. of Housing and Community Development
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219

To the members of the Governor's Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review,

In response to the request made by the Honorable Chairman Pat Herrity on November 10, 2011, I have compiled a list of mandates for the consideration of the Governor's Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review. This submission is in addition to the one provided to you on November 3, 2011. The selected mandates are believed to be either excessive or burdensome at the local level and could be eliminated without any significant cost to the State. In addition to the mandates recommended for review, I have also listed a few nonspecific topics for your review, which could contribute to greater efficiency and savings at the local and state level.

The mandates recommended for evaluation and possible elimination are found in the 2011 Catalog of State and Federal Mandates on Local Governments:

1. SFIN.TAX002 (pg.21) – Taxpayer Assistance

Commissioners of revenue must provide taxpayer assistance necessary for the preparation of any return required to be filed with his or her office or as directed by the Tax Commissioner, unless the commissioner of the revenue has requested that the Department of Taxation direct taxpayers to file such returns with the Department.

- a. The elimination of this mandate would reduce the burden on local resources.

2. SFIN.TAX003 (pg. 22) – Annual Assessment Sales Ratio Study

The clerk of the circuit court for each jurisdiction must forward the recordation receipts for all property conveyances for each month to the Department of Taxation. In addition, local assessing officers must make available to the Tax Commissioner data necessary to conduct an annual assessment sales ratio study. Upon publication of the study, the local assessing officer must post a copy of the study in his or her office.

- a. Recommend examining the necessity and utility of this study. The elimination of this study would allow localities to allocate its personnel resources in a more cost efficient manner.

3. SFIN.TD009 (pg.27) – Abandoned Real Property

Local treasurers or other designated local officials are required to report to the appointed escheator and State Treasurer by May 31 of each year real property that appears to meet the criteria for escheat on his or her records as of the end of the prior calendar year. The report shall be certified as to its accuracy by the commissioner of revenue or designated local official prior to submission. Following the auction of the property, the local treasurer or designated local official is required to request the delinquent taxes on each parcel sold. In the instance of improper escheat, the commissioner of revenue or other designated local official is required to certify this fact.

- a. The occurrence of abandoned property is very infrequent in Henrico. The elimination of this requirement would allow for greater efficiency regarding the use of county resources.

4. SHHR.DSS068 (pg.51) – State/Local Hospitalization Program Eligibility

Local social services agencies are required to determine eligibility upon application by local residents for assistance from the State/Local Hospitalization Program administered by the Department of Medical Assistance Services.

- a. Eliminating this mandate would provide a clear direction to localities in determining the necessary allocation of resources for this program.

5. SHHR.VDH030 (pg.63) – Disposition of Dead Bodies

In instances where (1) a dead body is unclaimed and not accepted by the Virginia Department of Health for scientific research, or (2) a body is claimed, but the claimant is unable to pay for proper disposition, the expenses for the disposition of the body shall be paid by the city or county where the death occurred or if the deceased was a Virginia resident, the city or county of residence. This does not apply to unclaimed bodies that were under the custody of the Department of Corrections or the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

- a. This mandate requires localities to pay for a State responsibility.

6. SOA.CB005 (pg.86) – Jail Revenues and Expenditures Reporting

Local and regional jails and jail farms which receive funds from the Compensation Board shall provide to the Board all sources and amounts of revenues and all expenditures associated with facility operations. Data shall be prescribed in a manner prescribed by the Board.

- a. The data collected for this mandate is also collected by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA). The elimination of this mandate could reduce the completion of duplicate tasks.

7. SOE.DOE104 (pg.117) – Virginia Public School Construction Grants

School divisions eligible to receive construction grants must follow the guidelines as issued by the Board of Education, and must provide matching funds based on the locality's composite index of ability to pay.

- a. This mandate is no longer valid as the State provides no funding for this purpose and should therefore be considered for elimination.

8. SPS.VDEM013 (pg.150) – Disaster Pet Planning/Animal Protection

Localities must coordinate with VDEM in developing emergency response plans to address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals in the event of a disaster.

- a. Recommend reviewing the necessity of this mandate. Elimination of this mandate would decrease the encumbrance of local resources.

Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your in depth consideration and potential elimination or modification of these State mandates.

Sincerely,



Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E.
County Manager

pc: Legislative Liaison



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF HENRICO

November 3, 2011

Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E.
County Manager

Ms. Susan Williams
Commission of Local Government
Department of Housing and Community Development
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Ms. Williams:

As suggested by Governor McDonnell in his letter dated October 4, 2011, I am providing a list of state mandates for the Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review to consider for modification or elimination. This list contains the mandates that have been identified as the most financially, and/or administratively burdensome, and a brief summary of the need for each respective mandate's modification or elimination.

I hope the establishment of this task force, provided in SB 1452, will not only reveal the individual mandates that cause local government's undue financial strain, but will catalyze actual changes in funding premises. While it is clearly in the interest of both State and County officials to continue to deliver quality services to our citizens, the significant shift in funding responsibilities to localities for state mandates is unsustainable.

The unfunded mandates identified for Task Force review include:

- Repeal (eliminate) the annual \$60 million reduction in State Aid to localities that is contained in the State budget.
 - This effectively amounts to a payment by localities to the State, which violates the traditional tenets of the State/locality relationship. In addition, the omission of program specific cuts shifts the administrative burden, and accountability, to the local level when allocating the reduction. A recommendation for modification is that the State take "ownership" of the cut by identifying specific program funding reductions.
- Rescind the requirement that localities pay for benefits related to the Line of Duty Act.
 - This is a benefit program created by the State. While the Code of Virginia still requires administration that benefits under the Act be paid out of the state treasury, budget changes have shifted funding to localities.
- Eliminate or modify the local match percentage for the Comprehensive Services Act, the cost of which has been increasingly shifted to localities.

Ms. Susan Williams

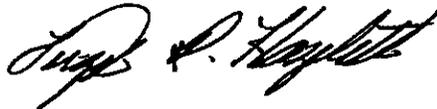
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- Cover the cost of health benefits for retired teachers. When this benefit was adopted by the General Assembly it was understood that the State would pay the costs. Those costs have subsequently been shifted to localities.

Thank you for your efforts to review these State unfunded mandates for either modification or elimination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Virgil R. Hazelett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V".

Virgil R. Hazelett, P.E.

County Manager