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James O. McReynolds



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November 10, 2011

The Governor's Task Force for Local  
Government Mandate Review  
c/o Ms. Susan Williams  
Local Government Policy Manager  
Department of Housing and Community Development  
600 East Main Street, Suite 300  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Ms. Williams:

York County welcomes the opportunity to provide the Governor's Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review with comments on mandates imposed on Virginia local governments.

The traditional state/local partnership that jointly provides certain services has well served the Commonwealth. However, there is concern that the recent trend of shifting additional funding responsibility to localities threatens this partnership and may negatively impact services that are of vital importance to our citizens. The County concurs with the list of top mandates of concern to counties as submitted by VACo and offers the following regarding some areas of particular concern:

#### **Reduction in Aid to Localities**

Eliminate the requirement that during the biennium localities must pass \$120 million of aid to localities back to the state.

#### **Line of Duty Act**

The Line of Duty Act was a program established by the General Assembly as a state paid benefit program. The understanding was that the state would always pay the costs of providing the benefit. The state should honor this commitment and reverse the decision to require local funding.

#### **Public Education**

Review educational requirements (Standards of Learning and Standards of Accreditation) and align them with the Standards of Quality. Given the trend of shifting more funding responsibility to localities and school divisions, the state should develop a model it can consistently fund. Additionally, re-benchmarking should be fully funded; and the state should not establish mandates that exceed federal standards.

### **Comprehensive Services Act**

The local share of the services included under the Act has steadily increased over the past several years. The administrative requirements placed on local governments have increased, including information gathering and report submissions. Mandatory local funding proportions have increased, and we recommend that the state's share of funding be restored to the 2006 levels.

### **Community Services Boards**

Eliminate the requirement that a performance contract with the state Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services be executed on an annual basis. This is an unnecessary, bureaucratic requirement that localities have little or no choice as to what will be agreed to.

### **Stormwater/TMDLs**

The Chesapeake Bay is of vital importance to the Commonwealth and the nation. There is a need to protect it and improve the water quality in order to maintain the Bay as viable economic, cultural, and scenic resource. Given the Bay's benefit to the state and its importance to the defense of our country, it is recommended that the state develop a funding plan that spreads the mandated costs of compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the Clean Water Act over the entire commonwealth rather than only to those localities in the watershed. In addition, it is recommended that the state work with Virginia local governments and other impacted states to secure appropriate federal financial participation in clean-up efforts.

### **Constitutional Officers**

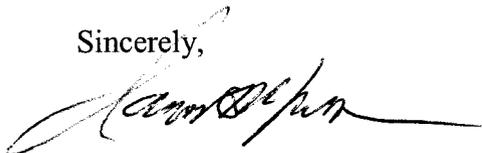
Approve appropriations that fully fund the state's obligations for constitutional officers.

### **Reporting and Administrative Requirements**

There are a number of reporting and administrative requirements that are costly and time consuming. Examples include recycling reports and required advertising of public notices in newspapers when a majority of citizens receive their news by other less costly and more effective means. It is recommended that there be a comprehensive review to determine the need for such requirements. Any that could be eliminated would improve the efficiency of both state and local government.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,



James O. McReynolds, CPA  
County Administrator

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Copies to: York County Board of Supervisors