



Police Jury Association

NEWS LETTER

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2009 REGULAR SESSION LEGISLATIVE REPORT #5

PJAL PACKGE UPDATE

- HB 88** McVea Allows any part-time elected official, such as a police juror, to be employed in the government of the U.S. This bill was brought to enable police jurors to work with the US Census Bureau in the upcoming census. It has passed the House and is pending in the Senate & Governmental Affairs Committee
- HB 353** Monica Increases the contract limit for public works projects from \$100K to \$150K. This bill was brought because the current contract limit is not adequate to meet the needs of parishes. The increase to \$150K was a compromise with the contractor associations and LABI and the bill has consensus support. It has passed the House and is pending in the Senate Transportation Committee.
- HB 604** Aubert Provides for the exchange of surplus property of a police jury for needed property owned by a private person, if all parties agree. Municipalities can already do such exchanges. It has passed the House and is pending before the Senate Local & Municipal Affairs Committee
- HB 657** Danahay Clarifies that the special rules set forth in the law for the use of Parish Transportation Fund money only apply to PTF money and not to all parish funds spent on road projects. The bill has passed the House Committee and is pending on the local and consent calendar of the House Floor, which is reserved for noncontroversial matters
- HB 765** Gallot Constitutional amendment decreasing the allocation to the state of revenues from the general severance tax on oil and natural gas production, resulting in more of that money going to the parishes where the oil and natural gas are produced. The bill passed the House Floor without objection and 43 co-authors were added.
- HB 777** Champagne Clarifies that appointments to certain boards and commissions and appointments to fill vacancies in elective offices are not prohibited "other transactions" under the Ethics Code. The bill was passed by the House and the Senate Committee and is awaiting action by the Senate Floor. The Senate Committee did add an amendment to address an Ethics issue pertaining to the LA Community and Technical College Board.
- HB 782** Ellington Provides additional service charge on wireless telecommunications services. This bill was brought to make sure that prepaid wireless providers were paying their fair share of the costs of operating 911. The bill passed the House and is pending before the Senate Commerce Committee.
- HB 823** Danahay Provides that special service districts that do not have high speed internet service are exempt from the requirements relating to the receipt of bids via high speed internet. The bill has passed the House Committee and is awaiting action by the House Floor.

ISSUES OF MAJOR INTEREST

Millage Roll Forward

There are a number of bills to repeal or limit the ability of local governments from rolling forward millage rates. In effect these bills assert that the members of the police juries and parish councils around the state need to have their authority in this area limited or stripped away. Keeping this local decision in the hands of the local elected officials will only happen if you get a commitment from your legislator to oppose these bills. We are generally opposing these bills.

The PJAL has come to an agreement with Rep. Greg Cromer on his HB 380 which will make some modest changes to the notice provisions for roll-forward meetings. Make of what the bill will mandate is already common practice. HB 83 by Rep. Tim Burns which repeats much of the language of HB 380 was reported out of the Ways & Means Committee. HB 83 also includes some objectionable language requiring the parish to post budget information and proposals for future expenditures along with projections as to impact on "median" homes on the internet. We will oppose HB 83.

SB 37 by Sen. Jack Donahue is a proposed constitutional amendment that was reported out of the Senate Revenue & Fiscal Affairs Committee and is pending action on the Senate Floor. The author amended the bill in committee to make it only applicable to taxing bodies which are governed by a NON-ELECTED board. Therefore it has no direct affect on parish governments. The bill provides that such non-elected taxing bodies could only roll-forward millages to the extent that such roll-forward realized an increase in ad valorem tax revenue of 2.5% or less. To exceed the 2.5% level the non-elected taxing body would need to resubmit the millage to the voters in an election held on either the gubernatorial or congressional election date. Sen Donahue committed to the members of the committee to withdraw the bill should the bill be amended to again include elected taxing bodies, such as parish governments.

Limits on Reassessment

There are 4 bills to limit the process of reassessment of property, the effect of which will be to reduce property taxes due on those properties. One Assessor opined that if these proposals become law, Louisiana will no longer need Assessors.

Sales and Use Tax Exemptions

There are almost 30 bills to grant exemptions to local sales & use taxes. We are urging each author to amend their bill to provide for local approval before an exemption to local taxes takes effect. This will leave the decision to you to decide if the exemption makes fiscal sense for your parish. Urge your legislators to insist on a **LOCAL OPTION** provision in all local sales & use tax exemption bills.

Homestead Exemption

There are a number of bills attempting to change the Homestead Exemption. The bills range from a proposal to increase the Homestead Exemption to \$150,000 to a proposal to change the Homestead Exemption to only after the first \$10,000 of value. None of these measures has moved forward but a number of them are being considered soon.

Red Light Cameras

There were two bills to impact the use of red-light cameras. HB 480 by Rep. Richmond proposed to ban the use of red-light cameras completely. HB 254 by Rep. Lambert proposed to have all red-light cameras permitted by the State with the State to keep ½ of all ticket revenues. Both bills were defeated in committee. A number of local government officials testified that the issue should be left to the local governments.

Anti-Meth Bill

HB 177 by Rep. Mills made proposals to help in the fight against the methamphetamine problem. It was amended and adopted by substitute bill HB 890. The bill furthers a NACo supported initiative. The bill has passed the House Floor with strong PJAL support and is awaiting consideration by the Senate Judiciary C Committee.

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