



ASSOCIATION OF TOWNS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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REJECT THE GOVERNOR'S COUNTYWIDE EFFICIENCY PLAN PROPOSAL

Removing the link in the proposed executive budget between Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) funding and the State Legislature adopting countywide efficiency legislation does not address several fundamental issues with the plan; the State Legislature must also reject Governor Cuomo's Countywide Efficiency Plan proposal (PPG Part U – S2005-A/A3005-A) because:

- **The Plan is Undemocratic**

The Governor's proposal requires countywide referendums on proposed efficiency plans. This sounds democratic at first glance, but what it really does is dilute the voices of residents impacted by those plans. For example, residents living in a city should not have a say in the plowing of town roads located across county.

- **The Plan Imposes a New Unfunded Mandate**

There is no direct funding to develop or implement countywide efficiency plans in the proposed budget. This means plans will be funded by property taxpayers. Every dollar spent on these efficiency plans is a dollar that could be spent filling potholes, plowing streets, upgrading older water and sewer systems, and providing local government services. A better approach for the Legislature to take would be to incentivize shared services.

- **The Plan Undermines Home Rule**

Home rule recognizes that decisions about a community are best made by those closest to it, but under the governor's proposal counties can dictate how a town, village or city provides services. This strips the authority of those with a vested interest in their community and creates a top down approach that flies in the face of the basic premise of home rule.

- **Local is Best**

For generations town residents and town officials decided what was best for their community, but the governor's plan changes that dynamic and makes counties the driving force behind shared services. A top down approach that concentrates local services could unnecessarily force your constituents to travel farther for basic government functions. This plan could also give decision making authority to officials unfamiliar with the local needs and wants of your community. Government services are most accessible and most responsive to the community when kept close to home.

- **The Plan is Bad for Taxpayers**

Giving counties unilateral authority to develop local efficiency plans creates the opportunity for counties to shift its expenses to town, city and village taxpayers. Pairing this with the fact that the program is an unfunded mandate could actually lead to higher property taxes.

A vote against the governor's countywide plan mandate is a vote for local choice and meeting the needs of your constituents.

Respectfully,
Gerald K. Geist
Executive Director