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MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION ALERT

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LEGISLATURE PREPARING FISCAL 2013 BUDGET

Ask Your House and Senate Members to add \$65 Million to the Local Aid Base and Fund Key Local Aid Priorities

Local budgets remain under tremendous stress after four years of recession and deep local aid cuts. The members of the House and Senate are beginning to shape the fiscal 2013 state budget, and local officials must act quickly to ensure that local aid is a top priority.

Legislative hearings on the Governor's budget recommendation are slated to wrap up early in March. The House budget committee is expected to release a bill in mid-April to be voted on by the end of the month. Senate budget debate is expected to begin in mid-May and be completed by the end of that month. Legislators are telling the budget committee leaders what their priorities are, and it is imperative that your Representatives and Senators hear from you and commit to placing local aid at the top of the agenda.

Last week, the MMA testified for nearly an hour before the joint House and Senate Ways and Means Committee, calling on Legislators to restore and increase vital local aid accounts and adopt a Local Aid Resolution to let cities and towns know as early as possible what to expect in the main municipal and school aid accounts. [Click here to download a copy of the MMA's testimony on local aid and the fiscal 2013 state budget.](#)

The MMA is calling on the Legislature to increase the Governor's \$834 million recommendation for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) by \$65 million, to incorporate the supplemental municipal aid distribution made last October into next year's local aid base.

Although the Governor included a section in his budget bill (House 2) that would provide another \$65 million supplemental aid distribution in fiscal 2013, that would happen only if the state ends fiscal 2012 with a high-enough surplus. The \$65 million needs to be included in the guaranteed up-front local aid appropriation, otherwise cities and towns will be unable to use the funds as they set their budgets this Spring, and communities would be denied the ability to use the \$65 million now to fund essential services to taxpayers.

The MMA is also asking legislators to fully fund the special education circuit breaker program, regional school transportation reimbursements, payments-in-lieu of taxes, charter school

reimbursements, the transportation of homeless students, veterans' services, Chapter 70, and other key accounts.

In addition, the Legislature must act swiftly to pass a strong Chapter 90 bond bill before the April 1 deadline for notifying communities of their fiscal 2013 authorization.

Please ask your Representatives and Senators to add the \$65 million to the local aid base, and fully fund the vital aid accounts that you rely on. Emphasize that local aid funding is \$665 million lower today than it was four years ago, and reliance on the property tax to fund municipal budgets is higher now than at any time in the past 30 years.

PLEASE CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS TODAY

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, feel free to contact us.

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