



City of Prineville

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STAFF REPORT

COUNCIL MEETING DATE: July 24, 2018

SUBJECT: League of Oregon Cities Legislative Priorities

PREPARED BY: Lisa Morgan, City Recorder

BACKGROUND:

The League of Oregon Cities has eight (8) policy committees: Community Development, Energy, Finance & Taxation, General Government, Human Resources, Telecom/Cable & Broadband, Transportation and Water. Each of these committees have members from cities across the state and are responsible for analyzing policy and technical issues. Prior to each legislative session, these committees meet several times to collectively identify prior, existing and potential future legislation that could or is impacting cities in a negative manner. Each committee then narrows their focus to the top issues identified and submits them to the LOC board. The LOC board then reviews those to make sure that they meet the goals and mission of LOC. That list was provided to department heads and council to identify their own priorities. The deadline to submit our city results to LOC to be counted is August 3rd. Then LOC will tally up all of the cities results together to develop their list of legislative priorities to advocate for on behalf of cities.

The results of our survey results are following in order of priority:

A. 9-1-1 Tax

Legislation:

Support legislation enhancing the effectiveness of the state's emergency communications system by increasing the 9-1-1 tax and/or seeking other sources of revenue and prohibiting legislative "sweeps" from emergency communications accounts managed by the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.

Background:

The League worked with other stakeholder groups in 2013 to extend the sunset date on the statewide 9-1-1 emergency communications tax to January 1, 2022 ([HB 3317](#)). In 2014, the League also worked to pass legislation including prepaid cellular devices and services under the 9-1-1 tax ([HB 4055](#)). As concerns mount with regard to disaster preparedness and recovery and as upgrades to communications technology become available, it is apparent that state and local governments do not have the resources necessary to address challenges or take advantage of opportunities (see an analysis in the League's 2018 State Shared Revenue Report, [here](#), and the Oregon Office of Emergency Management's "Emergency Communications Tax" webpage, [here](#)). Additional funding is needed and the practice of periodically sweeping funds out of the state's emergency management account for other uses must cease. It is worthy of note that the practice of "sweeps" disqualifies the state from receiving federal funds for emergency communications. It is unknown how many federal dollars have been foregone as a result of this policy.

Presented by the Telecom, Broadband & Cable Committee and endorsed by the Finance & Taxation Committee

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M. Mental Health Investment

Legislation:

The League will seek to protect and enhance the investments made to Oregon's treatment of the mentally ill.

Background:

In 2015, the Legislature funded rental and housing assistance for persons suffering from mental illness, specialized training for police officers to assist people in mental health crisis, multi-disciplinary crisis intervention teams and expanded access to treatment. While providing direct mental health services is not a standard city service, the state of care for persons in crisis had deteriorated to the point city police officers were regularly the primary public employee to provide interventions. The December, issue of Local Focus was devoted to cities and mental health, those articles may be found [here](#).

Because of the anticipated budget shortfalls in 2019, the General Government Committee would like the League to ensure that services established in 2015 are not cut and to capitalize on any opportunities that may exist or be created to enhance those investments.

Presented by the General Government Committee

L. Lodging Tax Definition Broadening

Legislation:

The League proposes adjusting and broadening the definitions of tourist, tourism promotion, and tourism-related facility as those terms are defined in the lodging tax statutes to ensure state-wide continued tourism and related [economic](#) (see page 17 of link) and [tax growth](#) (see page 223 of link), assist with city tourist costs, and provide local choice and revenue flexibility.

Background:

In 2003, when the state imposed a state lodging tax, the Legislature preempted cities by imposing restrictions on the use of local lodging tax revenues. (The percentage of restricted revenues varies by city.) Restricted tax revenues must be used for tourism promotion or tourism-related facilities. While the League will support all legislation that provides more flexibility on local tax usage, the League will advocate for lodging tax legislation that broadens those terms to clearly cover city costs of tourist events, tourism-related facility maintenance, tourist amenities, tourist attraction enhancement and public safety costs for special tourist events. Language from Section 3 of the [dash 1 amendment to HB 2064](#) (2017) and [Section 1 of HB 2064 \(2017\)](#) will likely serve as a starting place. See also this [power point presentation](#) and this [LOC testimony](#) (supporting HB 2064) for further information.

Presented by the Finance and Tax Committee

R. Property Tax Reform

Legislation:

The League of Oregon Cities proposes that the property tax system should be constitutionally and statutorily reformed as part of the 2019 session work on state and local tax reform and improving funding for [schools](#) (see pages 69-72 of link; property taxes make up 1/3 of school funding).

Background:

The property tax system is [broken and in need of repair](#) due to [Measures 5 and 50](#), which are both now over 20 years old. All local governments and schools rely heavily on property tax revenues to pay for services and capital expenses. Therefore, the League will participate in coalitions to help draft and advocate for both comprehensive and incremental property tax reform option packages. The League will remain flexible to support all legislation that improves the system, with a focus on a property tax package with these elements:

- To achieve equity, a system that transitions to a market-based property tax valuation system (RMV) rather than the present complex valuation system from Measure 50 (requires constitutional referral).
- To enhance fairness and adequacy, a system that makes various statutory changes, some of which would adjust the impact of a return to RMV. For example, the League supports a new reasonable homestead exemption (percentage of RMV with a cap) but also supports limiting or repealing various property tax exemptions that do not have a reasonable return on investment.
- To restore choice, a system that allows voters to adopt tax levies and establish tax rates outside of current limits (requires constitutional referral).

[SJR 3](#) (see page 50 of link)(constitutional referral with return to real market value system) and [SB 151](#) (see page 48 of link) (homestead exemption bill) from the 2017 session will likely serve as starting points. City property tax data including real market values and assessed values can be accessed [here](#).

Presented by the Finance and Tax Committee

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the results above, the City of Prineville will be submitting their top four legislative priorities for 9-1-1 tax, mental health investment, lodging tax definition broadening, and property tax reform to LOC to have our vote counted.

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