



Barrington Area Council  
Of Governments

**2015 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM**  
**Barrington Area Council of Governments**  
***RECOMMENDED as of November 25, 2014***

The village and township members of the Barrington Area Council of Governments (BACOG) strongly support local government authority over local decision-making and the right to self-determination. The enactment of laws and regulations that preempt local authority only hinder the ability of local governments to meet the needs of residents and address community problems.

We ask the General Assembly to oppose the pre-emption of home rule powers, which is an increasingly common component of legislative initiatives and of great concern to local governments. We also urge the State to respect the role of municipal and township governments in providing services to the public, which is a responsibility our governments take on willingly and carry out effectively for our residents. BACOG opposes the preemption of local rights, such as that to make land use and zoning decisions and the right to levy and collect taxes and fees. We oppose unfunded mandates by federal or state legislative, executive, or administrative action.

BACOG member governments operate independently, responsibly and transparently, and we urge the State not to interfere with the functioning of local government – but rather to focus on the critically important State matters at hand such as pension reform, tax reform, job creation and reduction of the State debt.

**PROTECT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES**

Local governments provide quality-of-life services to their residents such as police protection, fire response, parks, and roads and infrastructure. The State has a long-standing arrangement with its local governments to collect tax revenues on behalf of local governments and their residents to turn revenues back for these purposes. But while local governments have been responsible stewards of their revenues and have made deep and painful spending reductions since 2008 in order to align spending with lower revenues, the State has **not** done the same – instead taking part of the local share of funding in an attempt to address State financial problems.

We urge the General Assembly to protect local revenues including Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF), Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT), and to prevent any diversion of revenues that are relied upon by local governments. Diversions made by the State in recent years have been spent on State obligations that are not even related to fund purposes, and when these funds are lost to local governments it is local residents who suffer the loss of local services. These violations of long-standing agreements do not honor the relationship between the State and its local governments.

BACOG supports the restoration of a full 10% share of state Income Tax collections and the restoration of previously-diverted Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax revenues.

In the absence of federal legislation that could increase sales tax revenues to the state and local jurisdictions, the municipalities should continue to receive their usual portion of sales tax revenue collected with the State.

We oppose modifications to the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) that result in further restrictions on local authority. The State is urged to help by lifting unfunded mandates.

BACOG supports Congressional passage of the Marketplace Fairness Act to allow for the collection of taxes on out-of-state sales transactions.

#### REFORM LABOR STANDARDS

State mandates that increase the cost of doing business in communities contribute to fewer dollars being available locally to provide services to residents. Increasing the types of contracts or categories of work that are subject to the Prevailing Wage Act also increases local contract costs for public works, and therefore increase costs to taxpayers. BACOG does not support limitations on legislation that would increase labor and contract costs to local governments.

BACOG urges the reform of collective bargaining and arbitration requirements for public employees. Reforms would include allowing municipal officials to make manning and staffing decisions.

BACOG supports reforms to the Public Safety Employee Benefits Act (PSEBA) including the adoption of the federal definition of “catastrophic injury”. In the meantime, BACOG supports revisions in classifications to control or reduce the disability awards for more able-bodied employees.

#### SUPPORT STATEWIDE PUBLIC SAFETY PENSION REFORM

*[placeholder for statement from Pension Fairness for Illinois Communities Coalition – in development by the PFICC]*

Illinois municipalities and taxpayers continue to struggle under the burden of out-of-control municipal police and firefighter pension funding obligations. Municipalities have increased their annual combined police and fire pension contributions from 1988 to 2010 from \$89 million to \$510 million. In the same period, the combined unfunded liability of the municipal police and firefighter pension funds grew by almost \$7 BILLION. The legislative changes made by the General Assembly to date have not addressed liabilities for existing employees, and the cost to taxpayers for existing municipal public safety employees has reached a crisis state.

Additionally, a 2010 law allows local pension boards as of 2016 to divert State-collected local government revenues to fund pension benefits, which is potentially ruinous for municipalities and their taxpayers. We urge the General Assembly to repeal the diversion provision of this law, make benefit reductions and increase investment options. BACOG urges reforms that reduce unfunded liability and create long term stability and sustainability for the pension programs and balance the interests of municipal taxpayers and public employees.

## PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE AND GROUNDWATER

Groundwater is the sole water source for many communities in Illinois. It is also a natural resource that is precious and threatened in many parts of the state. Groundwater supplies all of the BACOG area's water needs. Although there is a great deal of groundwater below land surface, only a relatively small amount is available to extract and use without causing serious consequences to the aquifer system and the long-term sustainability of groundwater.

One of BACOG's highest priorities is supporting initiatives and funding for local government research and mapping of groundwater systems, implementation of groundwater protection measures, local policy development, and public education initiatives towards a sustainable and clean water supply. Data about groundwater levels is critical to these efforts, especially in the shallow aquifer system in the BACOG area in northeastern Illinois. We support funding for monitoring programs and establishment of a dedicated well monitoring network that will measure on a regular, frequent and long-term basis the groundwater levels throughout this region. Stormwater management is an integral component of this work.

Just as Illinois enacted strict protections for groundwater in recent fracking legislation, so we urge the General Assembly to protect groundwater throughout the State by funding water level monitoring and other data development that is needed to ensure groundwater sustainability for future generations. BACOG also supports efforts underway through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to create dedicated funding for these purposes.

Water supply is drawn privately or provided by localities (not state or regional entities), and BACOG participates in and supports the work of the Northwest Water Planning Alliance to plan and manage, on a regional level and by mutual cooperation, the water supply for this five-county area in conjunction with State efforts.

## SUPPORT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LAND USE, PLANNING AND ZONING

There are often conflicts between municipalities and counties over the development of land in unincorporated areas. When development is proposed, disagreements arise over the provision of services and allocation of revenues and the effects of development on surrounding neighborhoods and property values. County land uses on properties can conflict with the planned vision held by adjoining municipalities. Local residents feel the impacts of development first-hand but have little recourse when proposed land uses on unincorporated parcels are incompatible with surrounding neighborhoods and uses.

When conflicts escalate, recourse can take the form of property disconnection from a municipality, where the property becomes unincorporated county land and the county then makes decisions on future development. Alternately, the property can annex into another municipality. These actions undermine local planning and zoning, which residents rely on for protection of property values. Disconnection also undermines capital planning for other governmental districts such as schools, which rely on stability of planned land uses and densities for facility planning.

BACOG urges the General Assembly to support municipal authority in planning and zoning functions so that local plans and regulations can be implemented without disruption. We believe that municipalities should have greater authority in decision-making over properties within certain distances of municipal boundaries where residents and the provision of municipal services/resources would be affected. BACOG supports changes to the State statutes that would reconcile disconnection case law to the intent

of the statutes and that would strengthen existing standards so that properties would less easily be able to disconnect from municipalities.

#### IMPROVE THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THROUGHOUT THE REGION

The viability, economic vitality and character of communities depend on an efficient, high quality and environmentally sensitive transportation system in the region and State. BACOG supports state and federal funding for, as well as the dedication of significant funding from Canadian National to, the completion of Phases 2 and 3 of the Route 14 grade separation project at the CN/EJ&E Rail Road in the Village of Barrington. The Route 14 grade separation helps to protect the environmental quality and character of the BACOG area. We also support funding for the Highway 53 extension to Route 120 in Lake County to enhance mobility and accessibility and to relieve traffic congestion in central Lake County, Route 12 and adjacent areas.

**For further information, please contact:**

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