

MAINE SERVICE CENTERS COALITION

60 Community Drive • Augusta, Maine 04330 • (207) 623-8428

William Bridgeo, Chair
City of Augusta
(207) 626-2300

Catherine Conlow, Vice Chair
City of Bangor
(207) 992-204

Scott Morelli, Secretary
City of Gardiner
(207) 582-4200

Christine Landes, Treasurer
Town of Bethel
(207) 824-2669

Mr Anthony T Plante, Town Manager
Town of Windham
8 School Rd
Windham, ME 04062-4899



Dear Tony:

The 2017 Maine Legislative Session is just underway. The November election resulted in new legislative leadership and also produced a significant change in the balance of power. While the Democrats maintained a narrower control in the Maine House the Republican majority in the Maine Senate shrunk from 20 to 15 to only an 18 - 17 majority. While we believe this narrowing of the legislative balance of power may help in our efforts to protect against further raids on municipal revenue we found the Governor's recent biennial budget proposal to be discouraging and unlikely to enjoy any serious legislative support.

I wanted to take the opportunity to extend an invitation and ask that you consider rejoining the Maine Service Centers Coalition and provide dues support for this organization and the many policy initiatives and positions we advocated for on your behalf. The need for your participation in the Maine Service Centers Coalition's advocacy efforts has never been greater. Our efforts in outreach to local legislators, working with local municipal officials and in many cases lobbying with us at the State House were critical to success in defeating or mitigating so many of the attacks directed at municipal revenue streams and services.

This first session of the 128th Legislature again begins with Maine's most onerous fiscal problems not only unsolved but, in many cases not even prudently addressed. The Governor's recently unveiled general fund budget package again focuses on proposals that decimate municipal revenue streams and negatively impact virtually every Maine taxpayer (except those in the highest income brackets). The most onerous proposals include:

- Making permanent the temporary reduction in Revenue Sharing from 5% to 2% of the total sales and income taxes.
- Repealing the General Assistance Program directing shifting \$12 million onto property taxpayers.
- Increasing the Homestead Exemption to \$20,000 but eliminating all Maine homeowners under 65 years of age from the program.
- Repealing the Citizen Initiative passed in November that established a 3% surcharge on taxable income over \$200,000 dedicated to K-12 classroom funding to take effect this month. The budget proposes to impose a 3% surcharge on all Maine income taxpayers beginning January 2018 and without any obligation to direct the money to K-12 education.
- Further income tax reductions over next three years finally arriving at a flat tax rate of 2.75%.
- And what is certain to take the "creative accounting" award for the year- a complete overhaul of the K-12 funding formula, the EPS and all components as the state share continues to fall lower than 55%.

(over)

The Governor's proposals to pay for all of the hundreds of millions in tax cuts and shifts include a vast array of revenue generating proposals most of which have been introduced in almost every budget discussion over the past ten years. Virtually all have been defeated more than once and majority of those items generating the most revenue thru expanding the sales tax base have been defeated by significant bi-partisan majorities.

In addition, certain of the Governor's General Fund proposals highlight the serious problems with the shortfall in Highway Fund Revenue. Maine's Highway Fund faces a massive funding gap. A recent study by TRIP, a Washington DC based national transportation organization estimates that driving on deficient roads costs Maine residents \$1 billion annually in additional vehicle operating costs, congestion related delays and traffic crashes. In addition the study points out that 34% of Maine's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. This Governor and recent Legislatures continue to be unable or unwilling to come to grips with the rapid decline in highway fund revenue. Maine's Highway Fund continues to limp along on life support propped up only by Maine voter approved bond issues and GARVEE Bonds (such as the \$50 million bond included in the Governor's just released budget) that borrow against future federal revenue.

We are committed to restoring Revenue Sharing and other municipal revenue sources. We will continue to work with a group of organizations to restore full funding to municipalities. Our strategy includes holding every Maine legislator accountable for every vote that impacts municipal revenue and impairs our ability to provide long overdue property tax relief to our citizens.

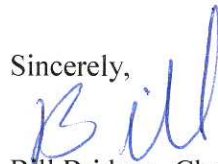
Given the ongoing fiscal problems, the Maine Service Centers Coalition leadership and staff will continue to need your help, support and input. For this Legislative Session, we are again relying upon Richard Trahey and his firm of Maine Governmental Relations for professional lobbying staff support. I believe that this relationship with Richard has benefited the Coalition greatly in providing us access to policy makers, sound policy advice and effective advocacy services.

We are enclosing the MSCC Membership Dues invoice for 2017 and hope you will respond favorably. Membership dues are set at twelve cents per capita based on your community's population (established by the 2000 U. S. Census) with a minimum dues payment of \$500 per community. In addition, enclosed please find an informational form that we ask you to update and return to us. Please be sure to note to whom we should rely upon as the principal REPRESENTATIVE and ALTERNATE for your community.

Also, please feel free to contact me directly at the Augusta City Hall (207.626.2300) or by e-mail at william.bridgeo@augustamaine.gov

Once again, thank you for your municipality's past support. Together we can make 2017 a productive year for the Maine Service Centers Coalition.

Sincerely,



Bill Bridgeo, Chairperson
Maine Service Centers Coalition
Augusta City Manager

Enclosures (3)

MAINE SERVICE CENTERS COALITION

C/O MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION
60 COMMUNITY DRIVE
AUGUSTA, ME 04330

DATE: January 30, 2017

DUES NOTICE: MSCC-MBR

Mr Anthony T Plante, Town Manager
Town of Windham
8 School Rd
Windham, ME 04062-4899

DATE	DESCRIPTION	POPULATION	AMOUNT
01-01-17	Annual Membership Dues for 2017 [Annual dues are based on 12¢ per capita with a minimum annual dues of \$500.00.] Thank you for considering membership in the Maine Service Center Coalition.	17,400	\$2,088.00
	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE		\$2,088.00

Please make checks payable to **MAINE SERVICE CENTERS COALITION**. If you have any questions, contact Theresa Chavarie in the MMA Executive Office at 1-800-452-8786. Thank you.

MAINE SERVICE CENTER COALITION

Resolution for Membership and Appointment of Voting Delegate Representative and Alternate

BE IT RESOLVED that the _____
(City/Town Council or Board of Selectmen)

hereby authorizes membership in the Maine Service Center Coalition for 2017 and designates:

(name) (position in municipality)

to be the appointed REPRESENTATIVE for the Maine Service Centers Coalition and is therefore authorized to vote at the Maine Service Centers Coalition business meetings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the designated ALTERNATE is:

(name) (position in municipality)

Dated

Attested To By:

Please return this Resolution as soon as possible to:

Maine Service Centers Coalition
c/o Theresa Chavarie, Manager, Member Relations
Maine Municipal Association
60 Community Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330
E-mail: tchavarie@memun.org

MAINE SERVICE CENTERS COALITION

VOTING DELEGATES - 2017

Membership Information Sheet

MSCC REPRESENTATIVE	MSCC ALTERNATE
NAME:	NAME:
TITLE:	TITLE:
MUNICIPALITY:	MUNICIPALITY:
MAILING ADDRESS:	MAILING ADDRESS:
CITY/ST/ZIP:	CITY/ST/ZIP:
TOWN OFFICE PHONE:	TOWN OFFICE PHONE:
WORK PHONE:	WORK PHONE:
HOME PHONE:	HOME PHONE:
FAX PHONE:	FAX PHONE:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	E-MAIL ADDRESS:

RETURN TO:

Maine Service Centers Coalition

c/o Theresa Chavarie, Manager of Member Relations

Maine Municipal Association

60 Community Drive

Augusta, Maine 04330

FAX: (207) 626-3358

E-MAIL: tchavarie@memun.org