

Reject the Governor’s Proposed Consolidation Mandate

NYCOM urges you to reject, in its entirety, the Governor’s proposal (PPGG Article VII, Part U) that would mandate each county executive/manager to develop a countywide municipal consolidation plan and hold a countywide referendum on such plan – and, if the vote fails, do it all over again in 2018.

NYCOM opposes this illogical, unnecessary and unworkable mandate on several grounds:



STOP the Linkage to AIM – The Governor’s budget attempts to hold the State Legislature (and, indirectly, municipal budgets) hostage by linking current levels of AIM funding to State legislative approval of this ill-conceived mandate. Such a linkage, if allowed to stand, would usurp the budgetary power of the State Legislature. For property tax relief, AIM should be increased, not used as a pawn in tying the Legislature’s hands.



STOP the Mandate - Imposing a new State mandate is no way to tackle New York’s property tax problem. It may not fit in with the Governor’s view of local government, but the truth is municipal leaders are doing more than ever to find shared efficiencies and limit spending. The property tax cap ensures it! The last thing our communities need is another mandate from Albany. Local governments are governed best when they are governed locally.



STOP the Top-Down Approach – Rather than provide more AIM funding and fewer State mandates, the Governor has taken the less productive route of proposing a new mandate that creates a top-down, State- and County-dictated process that will actually make enhanced shared services more difficult. Having counties (who to a large degree provide a different set of services than cities, villages and towns) dictate what will be included in the shared services referendum violates home rule and will only generate resistance among the public.



STOP the Un-Democratic Countywide Referendum – A countywide referendum on a plan that only impacts limited areas of the county is actually un-democratic, as it diminishes the voice of those living in the affected areas. Residents from one community will be allowed to vote on a proposal that in no way affects them, but that will, in fact, impact another community. Furthermore, the thousands of shared service arrangements already in existence in New York were designed and implemented by locally-elected municipal leaders working together collaboratively, keeping their constituents’ best interests at the forefront, without any legal or logical need for a referendum. Ironically, requiring a countywide referendum on a county-designed consolidation plan may actually hurt the chance of consolidations coming to fruition, particularly if such plan has any controversial aspect.

The best property tax relief plan the State Legislature can pass is one that increases AIM funding, reforms State mandates and removes barriers to local efficiency. NYCOM urges you to reject any attempt to force local governments to do what they are already doing.