Federal Issue Highlights 2020

Local Decision-Making Authority
Locally elected mayors and councilmembers are in the best position to determine what health, safety, and welfare regulations will have the greatest benefit for their constituents. Cities must have sufficient authority and flexibility to meet the challenges of governing and providing citizens with public services that meet their specific needs. **We urge Congress** to work to strengthen the federal, state, and municipal relationship and preserve the critical principle of local control.

Transportation
Federal funding for roads, transit, airports, railways, and ports provides critical support for the infrastructure that successful cities and a strong national economy need to grow. **We urge Congress** to support adequate and reliable long-term funding for transportation infrastructure that reflects local needs and priorities. A portion of federal transportation dollars should be made directly available to cities for important local projects.

Affordable Housing
Supplying affordable housing to all Minnesotans is the smartest investment we can make in Minnesota’s future. Unfortunately, federal funding for housing programs has been either frozen or cut, negatively impacting state funding as well. Cities are stepping up but they cannot close the housing affordability gap on their own. **We urge Congress** to prioritize affordable housing resources to meet the growing demand and to work with local partners to coordinate federal assistance.

Wireless Siting
Minnesota cities help provide next-generation wireless services by providing access to city assets and public rights of way for wireless equipment. Wireless companies pay city expenses for processing applications and reasonable rent for use of city assets. Recent rulemaking by the FCC has eroded local control by imposing shot clocks, preempting aesthetic requirements, and creating arbitrary limits for application fees and rents. **We urge Congress** to consider overturning the FCC rulings and oppose any legislation that further erodes local authority over the siting of wireless equipment.

Cable Franchising
To gain access to public rights of way needed to reach their customers, private cable companies pay a negotiated franchise fee to the city responsible for those public assets. A recent FCC Order allows cable companies to reduce their franchise fee payments by deducting non-financial franchise obligations. This change undermines current franchise fee agreements, threatens public programming, and hamstrings how cities manage public property. **We urge Congress** to address the harmful effects of this order and oppose any action to erode fair compensation for commercial use of public rights of way.

Water and Wastewater
Local governments provide safe, reliable, and affordable water and sewer service while meeting state and federal regulations for protecting public health and the environment. Minnesota has identified a $13 billion need for wastewater and drinking water infrastructure improvements over the next 20 years. Cities and the state are increasing investment to address this gap, but support from federal policymakers is crucial. **We urge Congress** to support additional funds for the Environmental Protection Agency’s state clean water and drinking water revolving loan accounts and to provide additional funding to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development for small and low-income communities.
The League of Minnesota Cities advocates on behalf of Minnesota cities, connecting the realities of local governance to the legislative processes in St. Paul and Washington, D.C.

The League partners with the National League of Cities to bring the voice of Minnesota's local government officials to Congress and the executive branch.

**MINNESOTA'S 853 CITIES BY POPULATION**

- **93%** under 25,000
- **82%** under 5,000
- **42%** under 500

The League of Minnesota Cities serves as the single most important advisor, advocate, and partner for all Minnesota cities.

In addition to advocacy at the Capitol, the League serves its members through:

- education and training
- insurance and risk management (LMC Insurance Trust)
- guidance and analysis on member issues
- problem-solving and mediation services
- research and information resources

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