



OHIO TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

The Ohio Township Association (OTA) would like to thank the Ohio Legislative Service Commission (LSC) for the opportunity to comment on the 2007 Local Impact Statement Report. The LSC Local Impact Statement (LIS) Report is an important educational resource for our members and the members of the General Assembly as it highlights the effect certain legislation will have on townships' budgets and keeps legislators and local officials aware of any unfunded mandates created in legislation.

In 1994, the General Assembly passed legislation requiring local fiscal impact statements for all legislation affecting local governments. Even with the enactment of that procedure, the General Assembly is still passing laws that impose new or additional requirements on local governments without the funding needed to implement such requirements.

The fiscal impact legislation may have on townships often is underestimated. Provisions established in legislation such as filing, notification and public hearing requirements could create significant costs for townships. Although the actual impact these new laws will have on townships will not be known until the laws are put into practice, the fiscal analyses provide a base for our townships to determine how a new law may affect their budgets. For example, HB 9 revises the public records law. This bill specifically requires local governments to adopt a public records policy, a records retention policy and requires elected officials to have public records training to ensure compliance with HB 9 procedures.

While the 2007 Local Impact Statement Report offers an analysis of legislation passed in 2006, it is not comprehensive. State budget bills are exempted from local impact statement requirements and, therefore, are not included in this report. A budget correction bill (HB 530) was passed in June of last year and includes several provisions with fiscal implications for townships. The OTA encourages the General Assembly to include budget bills in the LIS report in order to provide a more comprehensive look at how legislation passed affects local governments. A procedure should be established by which local governments can contest new laws that are not fully funded, yet give the General Assembly adequate time to modify or fund the mandates they impose.

The Ohio Township Association appreciates the opportunity to provide our input and thanks the Legislative Service Commission for all of their hard work in compiling this data, as it is truly beneficial to legislators and local government groups.