

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

County Government with a Unified Voice

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Honorable Michael J. Doherty
127 Belvidere Avenue
Washington, NJ 07882-1402

RE: SHARED SERVICES

Dear Senator Doherty:

On behalf of the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC), I would like the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss a legislative initiative that would allow counties to share county tax administrators.

NJAC is a strong advocate for sharing resources and consolidation where feasible as cost effective alternatives for providing necessary and often mandated government services in a more reliable and practical manner. Over the past decade, our counties have led the way on implementing innovative programs and initiatives that have improved the level of service provided and saved valuable taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately however, several antiquated laws remain on the books and have become significant barriers to moving forward with potential cost saving initiatives.

One such example is the fact that N.J.S.A. 54:3-7(b) requires the county board of taxation in each county to appoint a full time county tax administrator. As you know, the Governor appoints all tax board members with the advice and consent of the Senate, and the State Treasurer pays their salaries accordingly. However, counties must pay for the salaries of their county tax administrator at approximately \$120,000 - \$150,000 per year, plus pension and health benefits. Counties must also pay for the salaries of all clerical assistants, and for the operation and maintenance of the offices for the entire tax board and administrator.

Several of our counties, and as you know Hunterdon County, have expressed interest in sharing their county tax administrator as a meaningful cost saving measure, but have been advised that such an arrangement is prohibited by N.J.S.A. 54:3-7(b) as it again requires that counties employ their tax administrator

on a full-time basis. At a time in which all local governments are struggling to make ends meet by reducing critical staff, essential services, and capital improvement projects, this outdated law imposes an unnecessary barrier to progressively sharing services. With this in mind, we respectfully request that you consider sponsoring legislation that would amend the law concerning county boards of taxation as follows:

N.J.S.A. 54 (b) After the effective date of this 1979 amendatory and supplementary act, P.L.1979, c.499, any person holding the office of county tax administrator shall devote full time to his duties; provided, however, that any person currently holding office as a county board secretary may, at the option of the appointing authority, continue to serve on a part-time basis; provided he holds or obtains prior to July 1, 1981 a tax assessor certificate. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the governing body of the county may share its county tax administrator with another duly qualified county.

This proposed amendment will provide county governments throughout the State with an additional tool to implement cutting edge changes on how it does business. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration, and I would be happy to meet with you in person to discuss this important legislative initiative in more detail. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at (609) 394-3467 with any questions or concerns.

NJAC is committed to advocating for legislation, regulations, and policy directives that empower county governments to operate more effectively and efficiently. As a non-partisan organization that represents the only true regional form of government in the State with a unified and proactive voice, NJAC is dedicated to advancing innovative programs and initiatives for the sole purpose of saving valuable taxpayer dollars. Thank you again for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing back from you soon, so we can discuss this important and timely initiative in more detail.

Very truly yours,

John G. Donnadio, Esq.
Executive Director

cc: Hunterdon County Administrator Cynthia J. Yard