



**TOWN OF SUDBURY**  
*Office of the Town Manager*  
[www.sudbury.ma.us](http://www.sudbury.ma.us)

Maureen G. Valente  
Town Manager

278 Old Sudbury Road  
Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776-1843  
Tel: (978) 639-3381  
Fax: (978) 443-0756

E-mail: [townmanager@town.sudbury.ma.us](mailto:townmanager@town.sudbury.ma.us)

December 3, 2008

Hon. Stanley Rosenberg, Senate Chair  
Hon. Paul Donato, House Chair  
Special Municipal Relief Commission  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Rosenberg, Representative Donato, and Members of the Commission:

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) has already presented testimony to you this morning on the need that Massachusetts cities and towns have for powerful tools and resources to reduce the impact of the current economic recession on municipal services and to shield local taxpayers from further increases on the overburdened property tax.

The Massachusetts Municipal Management Association (MMMA), which represents city and town managers and administrators, respectfully submits additional testimony focusing on the need to correct and update legislation which tend to create inefficiencies, redundancies, and waste in the use of the limited financial and human resources municipal governments have at our disposal (in some cases inadvertently). The legislative priorities requested below do not require additional funding from the state, but rather enable towns to more effectively use the funds we already have.

The legislative priorities we are submitting have been developed collectively by the MMMA membership and represent a consensus that these changes are needed not just because of the difficult economic times we are experiencing but also because we feel they are best management practices. As such, they are challenging but vital next steps in achieving the highest level of efficient and effective municipal services for all our residents.

*Priority One: Improve municipalities' ability to effectively manage our human resources by adding tools which are available to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, local governments in other states and private sector employers. This includes:*

- Modernization of health plans. Towns and cities need the ability to change plan design for our employees without bargaining these changes. This would include the ability to join the Group Insurance Commission without the need for approval by the collective bargaining groups and the ability to join and manage regional joint purchase groups.
- Restructure Civil Service so that it remains responsible for only the testing of entry level applicants for police officer and firefighter positions. Civil Service has become an anachronism and duplicates other protections available to employees, the vast majority of whom are presented by unions or associations in accordance with M.G.L.c.150E.

Page 2.  
December 3, 2008

Hon. Stanley Rosenberg, Senate Chair  
Hon. Paul Donato, House Chair  
Special Municipal Relief Commission

- Transition police and fire personnel into the workers compensation system and eliminate M.G.L. c.41, s.111F.
- Require police and fire personnel to adhere to the same drug testing standards as those employees who are required to hold a Commercial Driver's License.

*Priority Two: Modernize purchasing laws.*

- Standardize all purchasing laws to the thresholds included in Chapter 30B. Raise the threshold in Chapter 149 requiring 3 written quotes for procuring goods and services from \$1 to \$5,000, with sound business practices for procurements under \$5,000.
- Raise the threshold in Chapter 149 and 30 requiring payment bonds for repair and construction projects from \$2,000 to \$50,000.
- Allow long-term leases to extend more than 10 years upon vote of the Board of Selectmen or Town/City Council. Suggest limit be changed to 99 years.
- Create a prevailing wage exemption by implementing a lower limit of \$1,000,000 before the prevailing wage rates apply.

*Priority Three: Increase flexibility within the municipal side of local government*

- Allow Boards of Selectmen to create administrative districts for provision of services on a regional level without creating new governmental entities.
- Allow a Town Meeting/City Council to implement an impact fee schedule associated with new development.
- Eliminate the penalty from State Library Commissioners when municipalities reduce library funding. This creates an incentive to exempt local libraries from cuts, and instead take funding out of other important services such as public works or youth services.
- Encourage payment-in-lieu-of-taxes programs by creating a process for municipalities to reach agreement with for-profit entities that are located on state or federally-owned land.
- Allow applicants for police officer and fire fighter positions to attend training academies and be fully trained prior to being hired by towns and cities.

These are only some of the recommendations we will be presenting to you by December 15th. We currently have task forces which are working to more fully develop these recommendations for the Commission, and we would be pleased to work with you to develop legislation as well.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present these recommendations to you.

Sincerely,

Maureen G. Valente  
Town Manager, Sudbury  
President, Massachusetts Municipal Management Association

Cc: Geoffrey Beckwith, Executive Director, Massachusetts Municipal Association