



## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT: March 3, 2010**

### **Budget**

This week the House and Senate suspended regular committee hearings to facilitate work on the FY 2011 budget. The Governor and the Legislature appear to be in agreement on a plan for the 2011 budget and mid-year 2010 cuts. The plan assumes the temporary sales tax on the May 18<sup>th</sup> ballot passes but these budget bills will have an embedded contingency budget that makes across the board cuts to state programs if the sales tax fails.

Once legislative leadership accumulates a sufficient number of “Yes” votes for this plan, the Governor is expected to call a Special Session.

Only a summary document has circulated thus far comparing the Governor’s proposal to an alternative proposed by the Legislature. This summary document lists a number of “fund sweeps” for both mid-year 2010 cuts and FY 2011. Though LTAF is not specifically listed, we’ve been told that LTAF revenue will be “redirected” to help cover the deficit. Your engagement is the only way to ensure that this does not happen.

Transit advocates have successfully reached out to the Legislature this year to protect LTAF funding and to preserve its spot as a lottery beneficiary. Please, once again, remind the Governor and your local legislators of the importance of LTAF funding to your community. In particular is the need to express the importance of these dollars to keep our para-transit programs running and to ensure that jurisdictions can keep routes that move their citizens to work and school.

Many of you have strong partnerships with the communities who need these services to live independently, to have access to groceries, etc. Reach out to them *today* and share with them the need to contact their legislators and the Governor about these life-sustaining services. As more information and actual budget bills become available, we will let you know.

### **May Election**

The Pro and Con campaigns for the May Temporary Sales Tax election are up and running. The *Yes on 100* and *Ax the Tax* campaigns have hired consultants, selected Chairs and are gearing up for battle. The stakes on this are high as both the Legislature’s budget office and the Governor’s have estimated \$900 million per year in temporary revenue could be generated from the Sales Tax increase for three years. The budget plan noted above assumes this revenue will be available. Without it, cuts will be significantly deeper. The upcoming budget is expected to include the cuts that will be needed and for these cuts to *automatically take effect* if the tax does not pass. This means there will not be an opportunity to revisit these cuts unless the Legislature is somehow compelled to revisit the budget after the May 18 election. This is highly unlikely. Your chance to express concerns regarding cuts is Now.

Anyone wishing to vote in the May 18 Special Election must be registered to vote by April 19. Early Voting starts April 22.