FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2009

Contact: Andrea Messinger
Office 517-908-0302, Cell 517-230-8379

Governor Urged to Veto Budget with Cuts that Will Increase Crime, Force Some Communities toward Insolvency
Governor’s Veto Needed to Protect Public Safety

LANSING, Mich. – Gov. Jennifer Granholm must take the courageous step of vetoing revenue sharing cuts approved by the Legislature that will increase crime and jeopardize public safety and devastate other essential services in Michigan communities, local government leaders across the state said today.

Mayors, city and village council members and other local leaders warned the revenue sharing cuts passed by the Legislature would force more police and firefighter layoffs, push some communities already in precarious financial shape toward insolvency, and threaten such basic local services as water and sewer systems, parks, and roads and bridges.

“The Legislature and Governor tell us, in local government, to protect Michigan’s citizens, to keep drinking water safe and clean, to maintain safe roads and bridges, and then they cut $3 billion in revenues intended exactly for those purposes,” said Jeffrey Jenks, Huntington Woods city commissioner and president of the Michigan Municipal League Board of Trustees. “If and when we have a public safety emergency that we at the local level can’t handle, most if not all of the blame falls squarely at the feet of every state lawmaker who has voted for these cuts. They should be ashamed of themselves for putting all of their constituents at risk; the Governor must veto this budget.”

Dan Gilmartin, executive director and CEO of the Michigan Municipal League, said many local communities across Michigan already in serious financial condition likely will be forced toward bankruptcy — a direct result of more than $3 billion in revenue sharing cuts made by the Legislature and Governor over the past eight years.

“The cuts approved by the Legislature put the public safety of Michigan citizens in local communities and neighborhoods at risk, plain and simple,” said Robin Beltramini, Troy city councilwoman. “If the Legislature’s cuts stand, Lansing has just forced local communities across Michigan to lay off more police officers and firefighters. It’s time for the Governor to do what she pledged to reject deep cuts that will harm Michigan citizens in real and catastrophic ways.”

Gary McDowell, city of Adrian mayor, Michigan Association of Mayors president and Michigan Municipal League trustee, called on the Governor to veto the revenue sharing cuts immediately.

MORE
“The Governor has an opportunity to define her legacy by vetoing a state budget that metaphorically is balanced on the backs of public safety, clean drinking water, and the state’s already crumbling roads and bridges,” McDowell said.

The state budget approved by the Legislature includes a 19-percent cut to Fiscal Year 2009-2010 revenue sharing funds. Revenue sharing funds essential local services, including police and fire protection, safe drinking water, sewer systems, road and bridge maintenance, and more.

Beltramini said all state lawmakers who vote to cut revenue sharing will eventually answer to their constituents when a public health and safety emergency can’t be handled because of the massive funding reductions.

The Michigan Municipal League advocates on behalf of its member communities in Lansing, Washington D.C., and the courts; provides educational opportunities for elected and appointed municipal officials; and assists municipal leaders in administering services to their communities through League programs and services. For more information, visit www.mml.org.

###