May 21, 2013

Senator
State of Michigan - Senate
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear State Senator,

As someone who is frequently in contact with your local government officials, you know first-hand how local communities and essential local services have suffered from cuts to statutory revenue sharing made by Michigan Legislatures and governors for the past dozen years. To date, those local revenue sharing cuts have totaled more than $6 billion. The Legislature has used the funds to plug holes in the state budget and to pay for state policies and programs, including tax cuts.

I am writing to ask you to support Michigan Senate’s Fiscal Year 2014 general government budget recommendation, which includes a modest 4.8-percent increase in funding for statutory revenue sharing. While this proposal does not come close to replacing the $6 billion in local revenue sharing cut by Lansing in recent years, it will at least help stop the bleeding and provide desperately needed funds for local police and fire protection, road and bridge maintenance, and other essential local services.

The state’s budget surplus announced last week provides the governor and the Legislature the opportunity to return some of the cuts that have been made to local services that keep people safe in neighborhoods, keep local drinking water clean, maintain local roads and bridges, fund local parks and libraries and more. Restoring the cuts to revenue sharing becomes even more critical if the personal property tax (PPT) law passed by the Legislature in December is approved by Michigan voters next year. This would cut local taxes paid by local businesses to local communities across the state by millions of dollars.

As the state’s economy slumped over the past dozen years, past decisions made by the Michigan Legislature to cut local revenue sharing were used to make up for the difference in the state’s budget gap. Now that Michigan is on the rebound, this modest increase to statutory revenue sharing adopted by the Michigan State Senate is reasonable and begins the process of ending fiscal pain felt by many of our communities. Cities and villages across our great state, including the city of Linden, have been tightening our fiscal belts for several years to weather this financial storm.

Now is the time to begin making strategic investments in our communities by increasing statutory revenue sharing in the FY 2013-14 budget, to make “Better Communities, Better Michigan.”

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you as the Michigan Legislature makes the final decisions on the state budget.

Sincerely,

David Lossing
Linden Mayor
Michigan Municipal League President