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**Masser, Michelle**

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**From:** Lashway, Lisa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 4:32 PM  
**To:** Canning, Sean; Masser, Michelle  
**Subject:** FW: User Friendly Budget Proposed Rules

Lisa Lashway  
Mt. Olive Twp. Clerk  
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**From:** NJLM to Municipal Officials [mailto:njlm-clerks@cityconnections.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 4:26 PM  
**To:** Lashway, Lisa  
**Subject:** User Friendly Budget Proposed Rules

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The banner features the NJLM logo on the left, which includes a stylized leaf and the text "NJLM New Jersey State League of Municipalities". To the right of the logo, the text reads "Municipal Clerks for Mayors, Elected Officials and Staff". On the far right, there is a small image of a building dome. Below the banner, the date "February 19, 2012" is printed.

**Re: User Friendly Budget Proposed Rules**

Dear Mayor:

The League of Municipalities submitted comments to the Division of Local Government Services regarding the proposed User Friendly Budget rules. The proposed rules are implementing P.L. 2007, c. 63 which Governor Corzine signed into law in April 2007.

While we appreciate that the proposed rules are implementing the provisions of a 2007 law, we are extremely troubled that the proposed rules are creating another reporting requirement for municipalities. The proposed reporting platform appears to be a combination of the Annual Financial Statement (AFS), Annual Debt Statement (ADS), and the municipal budget, thus creating duplication of work at the municipal level at a time when municipalities are doing more with less.

It appears as through the Division is making a strong push towards the automation of the required reporting documents. This has begun with the electronic filing of the tax levy cap worksheet and the ADS. We understand that the Supplemental Debt Statement and AFS are next.

It would seem that it is now the ideal time to re-engineer the requirements of the budget document itself by simplifying it and incorporating the intent of the user friendly budget. A single electronically filed document that allows Division staff to perform its review functions while at the same time satisfying the intent of the user friendly budget would seem to provide a universal solution to all the interested parties. To simply add another reporting document, that in itself is a rehashing of other filed documents, is counterintuitive to the concept of efficient government. We recommended that the Division seize the opportunity to provide solutions to local governments that will allow us to satisfy the State of New Jersey, our collective governing bodies and our constituents.

We agree with making detailed municipal budget information more accessible to the ordinary citizen. However, we do not think the proposed reporting platform will make it easier for the public to understand the municipal budget. There is too much detail on the proposed reporting platform. It should be a simple summary instead of raw data.

In addition to our comments above, we provide technical comments.

Very truly yours,

William G. Dressel, Jr.  
Executive Director

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