

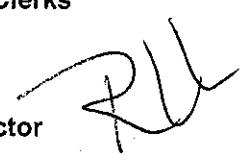
Police Jury Association

NEWS LETTER

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May 20, 2005

TO: Executive Board Members
Parish Presidents/Chairmen
Secretary Treasurers & Council Clerks
Parish Managers/Administrators
Region Presidents

FROM: Roland J. Dartez, Executive Director 

2005 REGULAR SESSION REPORT NO. 4

LEGISLATIVE SESSION HITS THE HALF-WAY POINT

The 2005 Legislative Session is at the half-way point. Both the House and the Senate are passing bills and moving them to the opposite chamber and will soon begin hearing those bills. HB1, the Appropriations bill, is still in the House Appropriations Committee, but is posed to move to the House floor. The bill has been on hold, awaiting the Revenue Estimating Conference. On Wednesday the Revenue Estimating Conference estimated that the State will realize an additional \$168 million next fiscal year and will have an additional \$192 million this fiscal year.

On Friday, Sen. Mount, Chair of Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs held a working group meeting to discuss the many bills addressing ad valorem tax issues. The PJAL participated as did representatives of the LMA and the Assessors. Sen. Nevers, after lengthy discussion, suggested that it may be appropriate for a study to be conducted after the session to try and establish uniformity in the ad valorem assessment process, in lieu of enacting any changes now. The PJAL supports such a study and would actively participate.

COMING UP IN THE WEEK OF MAY 23rd – 27th

- **HB 688**, the Telecommunications Tax, is scheduled to be heard in House Ways and Means on Tues. This bill would replace the telephone company franchises with a flat 2% tax on all telecommunications service, regular phone and cellular phone. Parishes currently do not earn anything from the franchises, and no local governments earn anything from the wireless companies. Urge your legislators to support HB 688.
- The tort reform bills urged by the Governor are ready to proceed to a House floor vote. **SB 258** has been deemed a duplicate of **HB 247** and will be up on the House floor as early as Monday. Urge your House members to support the Governor and support your parish and vote YES on **SB 258**.
- **SB 353** (formerly **SB 207**) the Railroad crossing bill will be on the Senate Floor Monday or Tuesday. Urge your Senator to strip the language that would withhold Parish Transportation Funds and accept the PJAL and LMA proposed amendments.
- The Senate Revenue and Fiscal Committee will re-hear the package of millage roll-forward bills on Tuesday. Please contact your Senator and urge him to oppose any attempt to repeal or limit roll-forward authority or cap assessments. Suggest that a study is the better way to proceed.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW – May 16th – 20th

- **HB 78** – The Rolling Rail Stock Tax Exemption was reported favorably as amended out of the Ways and Means Committee. This bill is a portion of the Union Tank Car project. The most significant amendment was the insertion of "local option" as to the local sales and use taxes.
- **HB 625** – The bill to resolve the IRS issues on JP's and Constables pay and off-duty officer witness fees passed the House on a vote of 102 yeas and 0 nays.
- **SB 207** – The bill has been replaced by a substitute bill **SB 353**. The PJAL has proposed substantive amendments with the LMA's concurrence that will remove all reference to the PTF and other monies.
- **HB 757** – The bill was intended to address the issue of 52-week sick leave for firefighters for off-duty injuries. The bill failed in committee and will be amended to be a study for the interim.
- The Senate Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Committee heard a number of Senate bills aimed at limiting or repealing the ability of local taxing bodies from rolling-forward millage rates after reassessment of property values. The Committee voted to defer all of the bills for a week to allow for members and interested parties discuss potential common ground and to formulate a consensus bill.
- **SB 291** – This bill provides for local and regional economic development districts. It came out of the Senate Committee with a number of PJAL amendments. Other significant amendments proposed are likely

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