

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Regionalization Conference**  
**Thursday September 2, 2010**  
**9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**  
**TALKING POINTS**

Good Morning. First, I would like to thank our Administration's Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies for organizing today's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference.

Looking back over the last year, it seems like there has been a lot of buzz about regionalization. And this is a good thing.

Last September, I joined you for our inaugural conference, and declared September 2009 as Regionalization Month. Following the conference, I traveled across the state to lead a series of events to highlight regionalization efforts in a range of services, such as public safety, public health, and economic development.

We all know sharing local services is not a new concept.

Regionalization Month proved that promoting regionalization helps inform cities and towns of new and creative ways to support needed services.

Since day one, Governor Patrick and I have proudly worked side by side with cities and towns to help communities steer their way through the global economic crisis. As a former mayor of Worcester, I understand and recognize these challenges.

Governor Patrick and I knew from the beginning the importance of working with all 351 municipalities to help communities find tools that will save money and increase revenue.

Early in our administration, Governor Patrick proposed the Municipal Partnership Act. This Act has provided some relief to communities by offering the option to join the state health insurance plan. To date, 26 communities and regional school districts have since joined the GIC, producing at least \$41 million in savings.

The Municipal Partnership Act also allowed us to merge underperforming local pension funds with the state's high-performing system. This has allowed us to manage our way through this global economic crisis more efficiently and responsibly.

This Act also eliminated the telecom tax exemption on poles and wires, generating an additional \$26 million for communities, and has allowed communities to levy additional local option meals and hotel taxes. To

date, 114 cities and towns have signed on to a local option meals tax, bringing in \$27 million in revenue, which is providing new sources of revenue critical to helping municipalities continue services during these challenging economic times.

Over the last 3 ½ years as we worked with cities and towns, our administration has continued to make Chapter 70 funding for education a top priority. Governor Patrick has had to make extremely difficult budgetary choices, yet we are still committed to the education of our school children.

Just last week, Governor Patrick announced the highest public school funding level in history thanks to a strong state and federal partnership that will deliver \$204 million in federal education funds to districts across the Commonwealth, protecting more than 2700 education positions. Additionally we received the highest score nationwide on the Race to the Top application and were awarded \$250 million over four years. The fact that Massachusetts is number one in student achievement is a testament to Governor Patrick and our administration's dedication to public education in the Commonwealth.

**Which brings me to today's announcement...**

Encouraging and promoting regionalization can be one more tool in the toolbox as we continue to work side by side with cities and towns.

Today, I am pleased to announce that the Patrick-Murray Administration is releasing \$450,000 in regionalization planning and implementation grants that will be distributed to eight school districts statewide. These grants will help school districts explore efficiencies in budgeting through expanded partnerships and increased capacity that will improve teaching and learning in schools.

We understand school district regionalization is a way to help districts discover new opportunities for shared budgeting to purchase goods and services, build teaching capacity and share best practices and educational approaches to help all students access a 21st century education.

We had success last year with our first round of these regionalization planning grants, which led to a new partnership between the towns of Ayer and Shirley. We look forward to future joint endeavors that will provide near-term solutions with long-lasting impacts in communities across the states.

[PAUSE]

Since last year's conference, we have made a lot of progress. Last fall, I was proud to be named chair of the Regionalization Advisory Commission. This Commission, enacted by the state legislature and signed by Governor Patrick last August, called together representatives from the Executive Branch, state legislators, local officials, and regional partners to study a range of opportunities, benefits and challenges of regionalizing local government services.

Over a six month period, the Commission met regularly to explore local services such as public health, public safety, education, library services, veterans' services, and economic development. Following the filing of the Commission's Report in April, I then partnered with Senator Jamie Eldridge, Representative Paul Donato, and the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government as well as the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies for a series of public hearings across the state. These hearings continued the dialogue about municipal collaborations with municipal officials and interested residents.

In addition to today's announcement to help regionalize school districts and the progress made by the Regionalization Advisory Commission, this past summer we also secured \$2 million for the District Local Technical Assistance Program in Fiscal Year 2011. Through this

program, the state partners with regional planning agencies to fund regional initiatives by applying a relatively small allocation of funds to expand collaboration among communities.

This administration wants to position the state to facilitate and encourage regionalization. Bringing everyone together for this second annual conference is critical as we continue the conversation, explore best practices, and reach out to our neighbors.

Today, you will learn about a number of best practices, as well as innovative concepts that will facilitate regionalization in the state. For example, in Melrose, Mayor Dolan has proposed to offer datacenter services to interested communities. With this shared service, each participating community would still have their dedicated servers, storage and services but all services would be housed in one server room, leveraging economies of scale to achieve savings on costs, including power and cooling costs for partnering communities.

Today, you will also learn about how our administration's effort to invest in energy efficiency is also supporting regionalization by cutting energy bills through greater efficiency and locally generated renewable power.

The Green Communities Division, a component of our administration's Massachusetts Recovery Plan, is encouraging regionalization by allowing regions to apply for the Green Communities designation, provided that all of the regional participants meet required criteria. Approximately \$8.1 million has been awarded to 35 newly designated Green Communities to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

In the weeks to come, we will also be announcing the next round of incentive grants for regional Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

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There's a lot being done, and we're excited about this momentum that has been built in support of sharing local services in Massachusetts.

Thank you, again, to the organizers and presenters of today's conference. And to you, the participants, for coming to Worcester to help the Commonwealth further regionalization efforts in the state.