

May 19, 2008

House Committee on Finance
c/o Rep. David K Levdansky, Chairman

Dear Chairman Levdansky and Members of the Committee on Finance:

We, as officials of Northumberland County, appreciate the opportunity to provide input and offer our view of how HB 2091 would impact us in the collection of real estate taxes here in our County. We believe that it would greatly assist our Assessment Bureau and prevent timely paid taxes from ending up in the Tax Claims Bureau.

Currently, we have one tax collector from one of our larger municipalities, who patently refuses to accept taxes paid by any third party, other than the taxpayer himself. As you are aware, lenders escrowing tax payments have many advantages to both the lender and the consumer. It is a method of payment favored by counties also, as it insures timely payment and remittance of real estate taxes which still accounts for the lion's share of the revenue for a 5th Class County's budget.

The failure of a tax collector to allow payments by third parties has resulted in timely payments being recorded as late, adding additional penalties, as well as causing many tax bills to be forwarded to the Tax Claims Bureau. This is not only unfair to the taxpayer but results in a bureaucratic nightmare to correct these problems. This situation exists in only one of thirty-six municipalities. In this sense we may be fortunate, for if other tax collectors were to follow suit, a very serious situation would result.

We especially appreciate the penalty section of the bill, for we as a county have no jurisdiction over a municipal tax collector. As the situation exists, it has caused an undue hardship in the

Assessment Bureau, Tax Claims Bureau and Treasurer's Office. We wholeheartedly support HB 2091 and urge that the Committee will vote favorably, so that this Bill will receive the full attention of the Legislature that it deserves. Thank you for your courtesies in allowing us to submit our position via letter in lieu of personal appearance.

Very truly yours,



Hugh A Jones, Esquire
Northumberland County Solicitor



Michael I Diehl
Northumberland County
Chief Assessor