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November 27, 2013

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Dee F. Bruemmer

RE: Urban County Coalition Legislative Priorities

Since the end of the last legislative session representatives of the four counties in the Urban County Coalition have been meeting to identify issues for the 2014 session. Carol Earnhardt and Tom Sunderbruch have been your Board representatives to the group over the last year. With the other county supervisors and our lobbyist the attached list of issues and priorities were developed.

The list includes Mental Health funding, Infrastructure funding and the unfunded or underfunded mandates from the State. The list also requests support for passenger rail, continue support for REAP funding, and a change in bonding for counties so they are treated the same as cities.

While each issue may not have the same importance in all four counties it was determined by consensus that these issues would be ones that we would have our lobbyists work on in the upcoming session. Each county board is now reviewing the list for approval. The intent is to have it finalized for distribution at our kickoff meeting on December 13, 2013.

If the Board has any additional items that we want to bring to the attention of our 10 legislators independent of the Urban County Coalition we should discuss those items to make sure we include them in any hand out we may use at the kickoff.



## Urban County Coalition

### Black Hawk, Johnson, Linn and Scott

## UCC Issues 2014 Draft

**Mental Health Funding** -- Following the major re-design of the Mental Health and Developmental Disability Services delivery system in Iowa in 2012 (SF 2315), it is essential that adequate funding be provided to allow counties to transition to the new funding system to avoid waiting lists for services.

- **Make sure that Developmental Disability services are included in core services**
- **Provide sufficient funds for FY 15 to ensure that counties and MH/DS regions have the resources necessary to provide and manage services**
- **Eliminate the 80% reversion to the state of projected savings to the county/regional system from the Healthy and Well Iowa program and direct those projected savings to investments in the regional service system**
- **Amend the Iowa Code to vest all employment responsibilities, including payment for the judicial mental health advocates with either the state, or the regions--Last year the Governor vetoed a provision requiring the state to assume these positions.**
- **Eliminate the requirement that the DHS director approve the region's budget and any subsequent budget amendments**

**Unfunded and underfunded mandates** -- Currently the fee structure for many user based services such as the fees for food inspection services, and the issuance of licenses and permits on behalf of the state, does not cover the cost for providing the service. As a result, these fees have been subsidized by property taxes for many years. (HSB 207)

- **Emergency Management Agency Funding** -- The current funding formula does not adequately address the needs of the urban counties in Iowa. **Eliminate the funding cap on urban counties. We also encourage the state to pass through more of the federal funding it receives to the counties. In addition the state should send a greater portion (50%) of the wireless surcharge funding to the local Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP)**
- **Paper Document Storage**--Provide assistance in converting to paperless filing systems, and review requirements for document storage and retention
- **Reduce Publishing Costs**--Allow local governments to publish meeting, and legal notices on-line and require only a summary to be published in local print outlets. Additionally allow counties to publish in only one newspaper.



- **Housing state offices at local taxpayer expense**--Currently some Counties are forced to house a variety of state agencies (DHS and the Courts for example) and receive little or no reimbursement from the state. In addition, the counties are forced to pay for expenses such as postage and office supplies at local taxpayer's expense. **We request that the state to no longer require that counties subsidize state agencies local office expenses.**

**Infrastructure funding** -- Counties are spending an increasing amount of local tax dollars and utilizing bonding capacity to fund a greater share of the rising costs of maintaining our state's aging transportation infrastructure. The current revenues that come from the Road Use Tax Fund have not kept pace with the increasing cost of construction and maintenance. **We ask that the State significantly increase funding to address the needs of Iowa's transportation infrastructure.**

## **Additional issues**

**Passenger Rail** -- We support passenger rail from the Quad Cities to Iowa City and on to Omaha. We believe this is a vital economic development issue and see it as a way to position our State for the future. **We ask that you provide the funding required to allow this service to continue into Iowa.**

**REAP Funding** --We would like to thank the Legislature and the Governor for increasing the funding for the REAP last year and encourage you to consider fully funding the program at the 20 million dollar level.

**Request for funding for linking trails or water trails (RIIF)**

**County Bonding** -- We believe that in matters of public finance, counties should be treated in the same manner as cities. We support the provisions of SF 416, which allows counties flexibility in bonding for certain projects that the cities currently enjoy. We also ask that the limit be raised to a consistent level with cities, currently five million.

**Public Pensions** -- The issue of unfunded liabilities is reaching a crisis in states across the country. We understand that Iowa is on substantially more stable financial footing than many other public pension systems but we encourage the Governor and Legislature to add the necessary revenue to bring the systems to the recommended level of capitalization, and review options necessary to ensure the financial health of the system.