



Pennsylvania Municipal League
President – Michael Lombardo, Mayor, City of Pittston



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners
President – Sam Juliano, Commissioner, North Versailles Township

MEMO

To: Chairman Jarrett Coleman and Chairwoman Christine Tartaglione
From: Amy Sturges, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy, The League and PSATC
Re: Opposition to House Bill 299 (PN 962) – OSHA for Public Employees
Date: September 14, 2023

On behalf of the members of the Pennsylvania Municipal League and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners, I write in strong opposition to House Bill 299 now in the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee. I ask that you please include this memo in your September 19 hearing packet.

House Bill 299 would establish the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requiring the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry to adopt the federal OSHA standards. As public employers, municipalities would fall under these standards. Compliance would result in a new, expensive and administratively onerous unfunded mandate on local governments.

Municipal employers are certainly concerned with minimizing worker injury to the greatest extent possible. Pennsylvania's municipalities must comply with the Pennsylvania Worker and Community Right to Know Act which covers exposure to hazardous materials, as well as CDL regulations from PennDOT. Additionally, municipalities are actively engaged in risk management practices as required by their insurers. At this time, there is no indication a safety problem exists at the local level that would require these additional and burdensome regulations.

Our members question if the imposition of federal OSHA standards will actually increase worker safety at the local level. Furthermore, public work does not necessarily match with private employment. How would OSHA regulations apply to the inherently dangerous, yet essential public safety positions of police and fire?

Additionally, we do not agree with the fines outlined in the bill because public tax dollars will be the source. In fact, taxpayer dollars will ultimately pay for this entire mandate. Therefore, we must be certain this is the most appropriate way to promote workplace safety at the local level.

Thank you for including our comments in the hearing packet. Please feel free to contact me at asturges@pml.org with any questions or comments regarding our position.