



Rhode Island Library Association

May 15, 2009

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From: Chris LaRoux, RILA President

RE: Governor's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2010

Public Libraries in Rhode Island are being used more than ever, and are providing valuable services that assist State and local agencies with helping patrons to find and apply for jobs, prepare for interviews, build resumes, and apply for social services such as unemployment and food stamps. At this critical time for Rhode Island residents, libraries are in need of stable funding.

I convened the RILA Legislative Action Committee on March 18 in response to the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal 2010. The meeting was chaired by David Macksam. The main discussion topics were:

1. Grant-in-Aid for public libraries was being level funding and construction funding was adequate to meet contractual obligations.
2. Change of wording of maintenance of effort to allow cities and towns to appropriate 80% of the appropriation for the previous year and still be eligible for full grant-in-aid.

The Committee decided to talk to legislators on the Finance Committee before making a final decision. There was a consensus that the grant-in-aid must be protected and that there might not be much that could be done with the maintenance of effort wording for this coming fiscal year.

The RILA Executive Board held a special meeting on April 24 to discuss the funding issues and the Legislative Action Committee report. The consensus of the RILA Executive Board is:

1. The RILA Executive Board applauds the Governor's maintenance of Grant-in-Aid at this year's level and adequate funding of construction money.
2. The General Assembly's Finance Committee amended the maintenance of effort wording to tie the 80% minimum municipal appropriation to the appropriation for FY2008. The RILA Executive Board feels this is a very important amendment to prevent a further reduction in municipal aid for those libraries that have been reduced below level funding in this fiscal year. RILA Board members are mindful of the economic situation facing cities and towns in Rhode Island and regret that maintenance of effort is being reduced for fiscal 2010. It is strongly urged that this be a one-year only amendment.

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www.rilibraryassoc.org