

# **Analysis of Shared Services and Impact of Proposed State Municipal Aid Cuts on Burlington County's 25 Smallest Municipalities**



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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In his February budget address, Governor Corzine proposed drastic reductions in municipal aid. Governor Corzine singled out smaller municipalities to receive the most severe cuts. Under the Governor's proposal, Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Receipts Aid (CMPTRA) would be completely eliminated for communities with a population of less than 5,000 and cut by 50% for communities with a population of less than 10,000. Larger municipalities would face much smaller reductions. The announced rationale for this disparate treatment was that smaller municipalities had not heeded the Governor's call for voluntarily sharing services or consolidating and that a 'club' would be required to achieve these policy goals.

Over half of Burlington County's municipalities have populations of less than 10,000. With these twenty-five municipalities facing huge cuts in aid, the Burlington County Bridge Commission (BCBC), in conjunction with the Burlington County Freeholders, launched an initiative in early March to address the Governor's concerns and to assist our towns in preserving aid. The initiative called for the Commission to work with municipalities to ascertain the current status of sharing services, the identification of additional potential shared services, the facilitation of grant applications for feasibility studies for sharing municipal services and an assessment of the impacts of Governor Corzine's proposed cuts.

Pursuant to its charge, the BCBC and its consultant, Community Grants Planning and Housing (CGP&H) drafted and sent surveys to the affected municipalities, conducted forums with those municipalities, and held follow-up conferences with local representatives during March and April.

The results of this effort are detailed in the pages of the report which follows. The report supports the following conclusions:

1. All twenty-five small communities are currently sharing many services on both a formal and informal basis. These services include courts, EMTs, animal control, tax assessors, construction code officials, trash collection services, and public safety mutual aid.
2. Additional municipal cost savings are being realized by the provision of regional services by Burlington County and the BCBC. Examples include the Countywide curbside recycling program, County Animal Shelter, County Health Department, County Library system, central communications, and joint purchasing.
3. Municipalities are actively engaged in studies to identify additional shared service opportunities.
4. Burlington County's twenty-five small municipalities are operating efficiently. Twenty-four of the twenty-five municipalities operate on a per capita cost average of \$874.50, significantly less than the statewide average of \$1221.00 and far less than cities such as Camden (\$1800) and Newark (\$2300).
5. The proposed cuts in aid would devastate our small municipalities. The most egregious example is Wrightstown Borough, (population 741) which would lose over \$450,000, thereby necessitating a property tax increase of over \$1800 per household.
6. Municipal aid to all smaller municipalities should be maintained at current levels while economies from new shared service opportunities are evaluated and implemented.

## **II. STATUS OF SHARED SERVICES**

### **A. Existing Municipal and School Shared Services**

Survey results and discussions with Burlington County's small municipalities reveal that all of these municipalities share services on a formal and informal basis. Nineteen municipalities have executed interlocal agreements to share services with other municipalities or school districts. The most common shared services which are the subject of interlocal service agreements are emergency services, trash collection services, fuel service, courts, tax assessors, animal control and construction officials. A list of these existing shared services is contained in Table 1. A list of shared schools in Burlington County is provided in Table 2.

Our study also revealed that all of our small municipalities share services on an informal basis. This is particularly true in our small riverfront communities. Examples include public works personnel and equipment such as street sweepers, snow removal equipment and Jettor trucks used in cleaning storm water drains. School districts and municipalities routinely share recreational facilities on an informal basis and partner on the maintenance of those facilities. Contiguous municipal police departments regularly offer police mutual aid without formal agreements.

In addition, many of our municipalities employ the same person on a part time basis to perform specific functions. For example, Mansfield employs the CFO of South Brunswick; Bass River and Shamong retain the same CFO; Woodland and Washington Township employ the same CFO; Palmyra and Riverton utilize the same tax assessor as do Delanco and Wrightstown. The New Hanover Assessor is also employed by the Borough of Pemberton and the Township of Hainesport.

**TABLE 1: Existing Shared Services**

	<b>Sharing Partner(s)</b>	<b>Service</b>
<b>Beverly City</b>	Edgewater Park & Delanco Delanco Beverly Sewage Authority	Trash Services Sewage Treatment Shared Equipment
<b>Bordentown City</b>	Bordentown Twp Bordentown Regional School District	Court System Community Educ/Rec Programs
<b>Chesterfield</b>	Chesterfield Elementary School	Gas, diesel fuel, equipment
<b>Delanco</b>	Riverside, Cinnaminson Riverside Beverly	Animal Control Salt Dome Sewage Treatment
<b>Eastampton</b>	Maple Shade Westampton, Hainesport	Tax Assessor Construction Official
<b>Edgewater Park</b>	Beverly City  Beverly City, Delanco and Willingboro Burlington Township Delanco Township  Delanco Township & Beverly City  Edgewater Park Brd of Education  Willingboro Township	EMS, Emergency Squad & Fire Dept Services, Light Rail Station Maintenance & Improvements Police Mutual Aid Fatal Accident Reconstruction Services Public Works Equipment, Chipping and Leaf Collection Residential Trash Collection Services, Domestic Violence Response Team, Shared Tactical Training - Police Dept Trash Collection Services, Gasoline/Diesel, Park Maintenance Animal Control
<b>Hainesport</b>	Westampton, Eastampton	Construction Official
<b>Mansfield</b>	Springfield Mansfield School District	Emergency Medical Services Equipment
<b>Medford Lakes</b>	Shamong & Tabernacle	PW Dept; Haz Waste Material Disposal
<b>New Hanover</b>	Upper Freehold Millstone North Hanover BOE Hainesport Stafford Township County Co-op	Animal Control Tax Collector Fuel CFO Zoning Officer, Building Inspector, Purchasing
<b>North Hanover</b>	Wrightstown Upper Freehold	Courts Animal Control, Summer Recreation
<b>Palmyra</b>	Palmyra BOE Riverton Riverton & Cinnaminson Riverton, Cinnaminson, Riverside & Delran	Trash Removal; Office Paper Senior Center Recreation/Parks Services Mutual Aid
<b>Riverside</b>	Cinnaminson & Delanco Riverton, Palmyra, Cinnaminson, & Delran Delanco Delran, Delran Sewer, Riverside Schools & Riverside Sewer	Animal Control Mutual Aid Salt Dome Vehicle Fuel-Gas & Diesel
<b>Riverton</b>	Palmyra & Cinnaminson Palmyra Palmyra, Cinnaminson, Riverside & Delran	Recreation/Parks Services Senior Center/Courts Mutual Aid
<b>Shamong</b>	Medford Lakes & Tabernacle Tabernacle	PW Dept; Haz Waste Material Disposal Office of Emergency Management
<b>Springfield</b>	Mansfield Wrightstown	Emergency Medical Services Construction Inspectors
<b>Tabernacle</b>	Shamong & Medford Lakes Shamong Tabernacle School District	PW Dept; Haz Waste Material Office of Emergency Management Fuel Services
<b>Westampton</b>	Eastampton, Hainesport Westampton School District	Construction Official Construction Office, Public Works, Recreation Facilities
<b>Wrightstown</b>	North Hanover Springfield	Courts Construction Inspectors

Note: We have not received survey responses from Fieldsboro, Woodland, Pemberton Boro, Bass River and Burlington City

**TABLE 2: Shared Schools in Burlington County**

<b>School</b>	<b>Participating Partner</b>
Bordentown Regional School District	Bordentown Township, Bordentown City, Fieldsboro
Lenape Regional High School	Woodland, Evesham, Mt. Laurel, Shamong, Medford, Medford Lakes, Southampton, Tabernacle
Northern Burlington Regional High School	Mansfield, Chesterfield, North Hanover, New Hanover, Wrightstown and Springfield (Ft. Dix and McGuire AFB)
Palmyra High School	Palmyra, Riverton and Beverly
Pemberton High School	Pemberton and Pemberton Boro
Rancocas Valley Regional High School	Mt. Holly, Eastampton, Westampton, Lumberton, and Hainesport
Riverside High School	Riverside and Delanco

**B. Burlington County and Burlington County Bridge Commission Regional Services**

Burlington County and the BCBC augment the municipal sharing of services by providing regional services to municipalities which result in cost savings to local governments and allow for a more efficient delivery of services. Services provided by Burlington County include:

- County Resource Recovery Facility, Sludge Disposal Facility and curbside recycling program (only New Jersey County to provide recycling at no cost to taxpayer)
- County Animal Shelter
- County Library— 7 branches and 9 members which include:

**Branch Libraries**

Bordentown  
Cinnaminson  
Evesham  
Maple Shade  
Pinelands/Medford  
Pemberton  
Riverton

**Member Libraries**

Beverly  
Burlington  
Crosswicks  
Delanco  
Florence  
Mount Holly  
New Gretna  
Riverside  
Vincentown

- County Health Department
- Municipal record storage assistance
- County Economic Development Department professionals provide land use planning assistance to municipalities
- County Cooperative Purchasing Program (e.g. fuel, salt, sand, office supplies)
- County Special Services School
- County Vocational School
- County Park System—8 existing parks across County; 4 additional parks are in planning/construction phase
- Central Dispatch For Fire, First Aid and Police

Services provided by the BCBC through its Improvement Authority Division include:

- Municipal, School and Fire District Shared Service Forums—28 held to date; 926 attendees
- Pooled Lease and Pooled Loan Programs—for municipal, school board and fire district, capital projects—programs have saved public entities over twelve (12) million dollars in interest payments. (49 participants to date)
- Grant writing for municipal initiatives—includes shared services feasibility studies and also includes planning and redevelopment grant initiatives for municipalities (over \$650,000 in grants obtained since 2006)
- Infrastructure Improvements for BCBC Gateway Municipalities—streetscapes, pocket parks etc— Burlington City, Palmyra, Riverside and Riverton.
- Regional Vehicle Wash Bays—allows neighboring communities to comply with New Jersey storm water management requirements by washing municipal vehicles at BCBC facilities—saving participating municipalities over \$100,000.
- Land Use Planning Services to municipalities—includes wastewater management template that saved Burlington County municipalities over \$100,000 per municipality in engineering fees to allow compliance with State mandated Stormwater Management Plan.
- Rancocas Creek Flood Mitigation project—Joint initiative with Burlington County to relieve local taxpayers in Lumberton, Southampton, Medford and Medford Lakes from the burden of permitting the desnagging of the Creek to help prevent recurrence of the devastation caused by 2004 and 2007 storms. The BCBC is paying for permitting costs and debris removal. Burlington County will truck and dispose of debris. Municipalities will execute interlocal service agreements to maintain the creek after cleanup initiative is completed. According to DEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson, this is a first ever shared services program in this arena. It will save millions of local taxpayer dollars.

### **III. SHARED SERVICES FEASIBILITY STUDIES**

As a result of the Governor's proposal and this response, several shared service feasibility studies have been initiated. Medford and Medford Lakes are pursuing a study concerning potential sharing opportunities. In addition, the BCBC has been requested to assist the following municipalities in shared service studies:

- Palmyra, Riverton and Cinnaminson—re: potential for tri-town police force
- Tabernacle, Shamong and Southampton—re: impact of potential loss of State Police services including the potential for creation of regional police force
- Springfield and North Hanover—re: sharing specified law enforcement services
- Maple Shade re: potential for solid waste disposal procurement consolidation throughout Burlington County municipalities.

An ongoing initiative of the BCBC will be communicating directly with small municipalities concerning the advisability of pursuing additional shared service feasibility studies in specific areas with neighboring towns.

#### **IV. ADDITIONAL SHARED SERVICES OPPORTUNITIES**

This report documents that numerous small municipalities within Burlington County share courts, construction officials, animal control, fuel and emergency management. Because of the success of these arrangements it is recommended that the remaining small municipalities consider sharing these services.

The County emergency dispatch system has been hugely successful. All Burlington County municipalities utilize this system for fire and first aid emergencies. Twenty-six of the thirty-three municipalities with local police departments also utilize the central dispatch system for police calls. Seven municipalities perform police dispatching locally. Those municipalities are: Bordentown Township, Cinnaminson, Florence, Maple Shade, Medford, Moorestown and Mount Laurel. These towns should evaluate the savings to be achieved and consider joining the County's centralized police dispatch system.

Likewise, consideration should be given to establishing a county wide EMS system. Similar consideration should also be given to reducing the number of municipal fire districts and regionalizing utility authorities. Further shared services forums will consider these options.

The consolidation of police forces has begun to be evaluated. More needs to be done to explore potential consolidation in what has historically been a controversial subject.

Finally, there are natural geographical connections among many of our smaller municipalities. These municipalities and possible shared service opportunities are listed in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: Potential Opportunities for Shared Services**

Sharing Partner(s)	Service(s)
Beverly City, Delanco, Edgewater Park, & Riverside	Tax Collections, Courts, Construction Code, Public Works, Police and Fire
Riverton, Palmyra & Cinnaminson	Policing, Public Works, Fire, Administrative Services
Bordentown City & Bordentown Twp	Police, Public Works, Fire, Tax Collection, Construction Code Administrative Services, EMS and Fire.
Hainesport, Mt. Holly, Eastampton & Lumberton	Police, Fire, EMS, Public Works
Shamong, Tabernacle & Southampton	Public Works, Fire, EMS, Police
Riverside & Delran	Construction Code, Public Works, Fire

## **V. LOCAL EFFICIENCY**

Per Capita spending for Burlington County's twenty five small municipalities averages \$ 940. (See Table 4). This average is skewed by Washington Township which receives a mandated in lieu payment from the State of \$1.1 million annually. The average per capita spending for the remaining twenty four municipalities is \$874.50.

This average is consistent with the per capita spending average for Burlington County's largest towns which is \$800. It should be noted that the state average is \$1,221. Large cities spend much more. For example, Camden spends over \$1,800 per resident and Newark spends over \$2,300 per resident.

This analysis makes it clear that Burlington County's small municipalities are currently operating in an efficient manner. Previous sections of this report show that these small municipalities are leaders in sharing services and are actively pursuing even greater efficiency through the additional sharing of services. Hence, these small municipalities do not deserve draconian cuts in aid.

**TABLE 4: Basic Efficiency Data For Burlington County's Smallest Municipalities**

Municipality	Total Revenue (Municipal)	2006 Population	Per Capita Municipal Spending
Bass River	1,580,000.00	1,570	\$1,012
Beverly City	2,432,652.59	2,651	\$911
Bordentown City	4,733,028.70	3,953	\$1,194
Burlington City	14,051,433.30	9,715	\$1,435
Chesterfield	3,265,068.04	6,451	\$528
Delanco	4,330,899.94	4,224	\$1,035
Eastampton	4,317,120.00	6,697	\$642
Edgewater Park	5,968,100.00	7,968	\$747
Fieldsboro	655,586.00	577	\$1,126
Hainesport	4,130,861.43	6,161	\$675
Mansfield	5,292,906.00	8,047	\$660
Medford Lakes	4,186,200.00	4,161	\$1,049
New Hanover	2,065,088.00	9,479	\$214
North Hanover	2,879,210.00	7,577	\$379
Palmyra	6,567,367.96	7,598	\$859
Pemberton Boro	1,941,179.00	1,381	\$1,417
Riverside	6,047,748.61	7,950	\$764
Riverton	3,008,578.59	2,715	\$1,128
Shamong	2,707,775.00	6,873	\$394
Springfield	3,327,210.00	3,570	\$935
Tabernacle	3,396,116.00	7,337	\$462
Washington	1,626,682.00	651	\$2,522
Westampton	7,734,319.00	8,771	\$893
Woodland	1,136,500.00	1,374	\$859
Wrightstown	1,245,581.00	741	\$1,670

## VI. IMPACTS OF PROPOSED CUTS

In 2007, Burlington County's twenty-five municipalities with small populations received a combined \$25.7 million in funding. For 2008, these communities stand to lose a combined \$5 million in funds. The three smallest communities—Fieldsboro, Washington Township and Wrightstown Borough—are set to lose a combined \$600,008 for 2008. Wrightstown, with a population of 741 residents, would lose the most funding—\$455,108.

As *Table 5* indicates, many of Burlington County's smallest municipalities would be severely impacted by the proposed elimination/reduction in municipal aid. For example, Wrightstown Borough would see the highest tax rate increase at \$1.75 per \$100.00. It should be noted that since Wrightstown has the third smallest population in Burlington County, this would potentially result in an average per household tax increase of \$1,800. New Hanover follows with a tax rate of \$.73, which equates to a \$1,268 average per household tax increase. Other municipalities of note include Beverly City with a \$.27 tax increase which equates to a \$236.58 average per household tax increase and North Hanover with a \$.13 tax increase and an average household tax increase of \$235. Governor Corzine's aid cut plan would, all other costs remaining the same, result in an average household tax increase of \$210.

**TABLE 5:  
Potential Municipal Tax Increase on Burlington County's Smallest Municipalities\***

Municipality	2006 Population	Proposed Budget Cut	Value of One Cent	CY08 Tax increase (cents per 100)	Avg. Assessed Value	Avg. Per HH Tax Increase
Bass River	1,570	\$75,438	\$20,800	3.6	282,600	\$101.74
Beverly City	2,651	\$224,515	\$8,300	27.1	87,300	\$236.58
Bordentown City	3,953	\$266,558	\$40,200	6.6	246,000	\$162.36
Burlington City	9,715	\$212,901	\$43,400	4.9	95,200	\$46.65
Chesterfield	6,451	\$137,314	\$72,000	1.9	455,300	\$86.51
Delanco	4,224	\$296,961	\$46,900	6.3	241,100	\$151.83
Eastampton	6,697	\$161,327	\$52,100	3.1	274,600	\$85.13
Edgewater Park	7,968	\$288,344	\$31,000	9.3	99,600	\$92.63
Fieldsboro	577	\$92,801	\$28,000	3.3	94,700	\$31.25
Hainesport	6,161	\$90,094	\$43,800	2.1	162,200	\$34.06
Mansfield	8,047	\$97,620	\$129,500	0.8	335,500	\$26.84
Medford Lakes	4,161	\$199,506	\$23,250	8.6	148,000	\$127.28
New Hanover	9,479	434,500	\$5,900	73.6	172,300	\$1,268.13
North Hanover	7,577	\$303,386	\$23,250	13	180,900	\$235.17
Palmyra	7,598	\$236,329	\$31,000	7.6	97,600	\$74.18
Pemberton Boro	1,381	\$57,285	\$5,900	9.7	109,400	\$106.12
Riverside	7,950	\$327,053	\$45,000	7.3	153,900	\$112.35
Riverton	2,715	\$146,683	\$13,200	11.1	153,900	\$170.83
Shamong	6,873	\$134,444	\$40,500	3.3	190,500	\$62.87
Springfield	3,570	\$133,219	\$44,000	3	320,200	\$96.06
Tabernacle	7,337	\$121,316	\$73,200	1.7	296,900	\$50.47
Washington	651	\$52,099	\$12,400	4.2	307,900	\$129.32
Westampton	8,771	\$176,271	\$68,900	2.6	149,200	\$38.79
Woodland	1,374	\$62,541	\$16,950	3.7	282,500	\$104.53
Wrightstown	741	\$455,108	\$2,600	175	102,900	\$1,800.75

\* The potential tax increases do not include any previously proposed increase in local school or local purpose taxes.

In addition to municipal aid cuts, Governor Corzine has also proposed making rural municipalities pay for State Police protection. The State Treasury Department is currently working on a formula to determine how much each town would pay for full- or part-time State Police Patrols. The Office of Legislative Services recently released a preliminary analysis that revealed potentially huge new costs for several Burlington County Municipalities. The cost estimate for Southampton Township of \$1,567,830 is the highest in the State. These estimates are summarized in *Table 6*.

**TABLE 6: Projected State Police Bills for Burlington County's Rural Municipalities\***

Municipality	Type of Service Provided	Housing Units	Cost
Bass River	FT	602	\$198,660
Chesterfield	PT	924	\$212,520
Hainesport	FT	1,555	\$513,150
Mansfield	PT	2,122	\$488,060
New Hanover	PT	1,381	\$317,630
North Hanover	PT	2,670	\$614,100
Pemberton Boro	PT	513	\$117,990
Shamong	FT	2,175	\$717,750
Springfield	PT	1,138	\$261,740
Tabernacle	FT	2,385	\$787,050
Washington	FT	171	\$56,430
Woodland	FT	448	\$147,840

\* For some of the smaller pinelands communities, the proposed fee-for-service charge for state policing services has the potential to be more damaging than the proposed cuts in local aid. These communities face unprecedented tax increases if both proposals are enacted.

Also, the Governor’s proposal fails to take into consideration the financial condition of individual small municipalities. Based on the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJCA) own measure of community health, the Municipal Distress Index (MDI), the municipalities in Burlington County which are, by the State’s own measure, the most distressed, face some of the largest municipal aid cuts. Out of the 566 New Jersey municipalities, seven of the smallest Burlington County municipalities are ranked in the top 25% of the most distressed communities in New Jersey, with an additional municipality, the Borough of Palmyra, just outside of the lowest 25%. As examples, Beverly City and Bass River Township have MDI ranks of 36 and 56 respectively on the NJCA’s MDI. Under the Corzine plan, Beverly City would see an average per household tax increase of approximately \$236, while Bass River would see an average per household increase of \$101.74. Eliminating or reducing aid in these, New Jersey’s most troubled smaller communities, can only hinder local (and state) efforts for these communities to revitalize. The proposed municipal aid elimination/reduction runs counter to the State’s own policies and objectives. The MDI as well as average per household tax increases in selected municipalities are shown below in *Table 7*.

<b>TABLE 7: Burlington County’s Most Impacted Municipalities Based on MDI</b>				
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Municipal Distress Index</b>	<b>CY07 Municipal Aid Allocation</b>	<b>Proposed CY08 Municipal Aid Allocation</b>	<b>Avg. Per HH Tax Increase</b>
Bass River	53	\$423,100	\$347,662	\$101.74
Beverly	36	\$437,696	\$213,181	\$236.58
Pemberton Boro	63	\$184,610	\$57,285	106.12

The preceding paragraph of this report has already identified how the proposed Corzine aid cuts would negatively impact the State's efforts to revitalize some of the most economically distressed communities in Burlington County. This is also verified when the state's priorities as outlined in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (SDRP) are examined. The SDRP directs that investment be guided into centers, where development and redevelopment are encouraged. The goal is to facilitate those areas which are already developed and have existing infrastructure (in the majority of cases) to accommodate a significant portion of the County's growth, thus preserving the agricultural and rural Pinelands areas. The proposed elimination/reduction in municipal aid to our small communities runs directly counter to this goal.

Communities that are designated by the state as "Centers", such as our riverfront communities, and rural centers such as Chesterfield are expected to absorb future growth to prevent sprawl in other areas of the County. These growth areas should not be slated for municipal aid cuts as the infrastructure and other costs associated with growth are high.

Furthermore, under the Corzine plan, larger cities and municipalities face far less significant cuts in municipal aid, and in many cases, particularly in the cities, municipal aid is a far larger percentage of the overall local budget than in most small communities. For example, the City of Camden (New Jersey's most distressed community) is targeted to receive \$44,980,957 in municipal aid in CY2008. This amounts to a per capita aid cost of more than \$567. The City of Camden under the proposed plan will see no reduction in municipal aid. In contrast, Beverly, Burlington County smallest city, and New Jersey's 36<sup>th</sup> most distressed community, is slated to lose 100% of its municipal aid. The inequity of the Governor's proposed aid cuts to small towns cannot be underscored enough.

## **VII. TIMING AND LACK OF PHASING OF PROPOSED CUTS**

Burlington County municipalities have also reported that the timing of the municipal aid cuts has two negative impacts. First, municipalities, most of which have already introduced their local budgets, will have to make major budget revisions and may not have certified budgets until late summer which is almost eight months into their fiscal year. This potentially limits their ability to collect local taxes and provide schools and the County with their share of taxes, in a timely manner necessary to meet those three entities operating and capital expenses.

Secondly, the immediacy of the cuts as well as the lack of phasing makes it difficult for municipalities to utilize the Sharing Available Resources Efficiently (SHARE) program to conduct studies to determine the most cost effective sharing or consolidation of services. The State is promoting the SHARE program as the solution to the proposed municipal aid elimination/reduction. Under the SHARE program, municipalities can apply for State funds to study the cost benefits of sharing identified services. Once appropriate services are identified, municipalities can, in theory, save financial resources by sharing the services, which the State argues, will offset the cuts in municipal aid.

There are several reasons, however, why the SHARE program will not and cannot completely offset the proposed municipal aid cuts. The municipalities need time to apply for the grants, contract for the studies, evaluate the findings, apply for implementation funding (if the study concludes the potential shared service is feasible), and then develop interlocal agreements and merge the studied services. The majority of local government officials estimate this to be a two-year process at minimum, with the potential for the process to take significantly longer when the sharing of more complex services such as public safety is in question.

Finally, it is unclear as to what will constitute a valid and approved use of SHARE funding.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This report has documented that Burlington County's small municipalities run efficiently, share many services and are eager to share more. To single out those communities for drastic aid cuts would result in significant tax increases that are unwarranted and unfair. Properly motivated these municipalities can and will do more. Punishment in the form of loss of municipal aid in 2008 would be counter productive and harmful to the progress that has been and continues to be made as of this date.

For these reasons we recommend and respectfully request that the Legislature reject Governor Corzine's plan and fully restore aid to Burlington County's small municipalities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Since preparation of this report, Governor Corzine has provided a revised "proposed aid schedule" which would restore a fraction of aid to small municipalities but which is "subject to change" and budget adoption. Because of the small percentage of restoration (typically 10-20%) and because of the accompanying caveats the conclusions and recommendations in this report remain valid.

## **METHODOLOGY & REFERENCES**

Each municipality was surveyed to collect data for this report. The following is a summary of the data sources:

**Table 1: Existing & Potential Sharing of Services among Smallest Municipalities in Burlington County**

Burlington County Bridge Commission Survey: Data received from municipal survey conducted by the BCBC. Municipal clerks and or chief financial officers responded to the survey.

**Table 2: Shared Schools in Burlington County**

Acquired via phone survey of all impacted municipalities in Burlington County

**Table 3: Potential Opportunities for Shared Services**

Acquired via phone survey of all impacted municipalities in Burlington County

**Table 4: Basic Efficiency Data for Burlington County's Smallest Municipalities**

Acquired via phone survey of all impacted municipalities in Burlington County

**Table 5: Potential Municipal Tax Increase on Burlington County's Smallest Municipalities**

Burlington County Bridge Commission Survey: Data received from the municipal survey conducted by the BCBC. Municipal clerks and or chief financial officers responded to the survey.

**Table 6: Projected State Police Bills for Burlington County's Rural Municipalities**

The estimate was prepared by the nonpartisan Office of Legislative Services, assuming a fee of \$330 per housing unit for full time coverage and \$230 per housing unit for part time coverage. These are only estimates. Treasury officials are working on their own formula.

**Table 7: Burlington County's Most Impacted Municipalities Based on MDI**

Data received from the New Jersey 1996 Municipal Distressed Cities Index.