
Va. localities urge delay in minimum wage boost, other mandates

But league asks to protect money for K-12, public safety

BY MICHAEL MARTZ

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Virginia's local governments say they face economic calamity unless the state delays new legislation — including

an increase in the minimum wage, permission to allow collective bargaining for local government employees and expanded eligibility for workers' compensation — that the General Assembly enacted this year before the coronavirus pandemic shut down many businesses and put thousands of Virginians out of work.

After meeting with Gov. Ralph Northam and Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne early this week, the Virginia Municipal League formally asked the state on Thursday for a one-year delay in implementing almost a dozen pieces of legislation that it said “will increase local costs and that the General Assembly did not adequately fund.”

Layne confirmed on Friday that he asked the league to address its concerns directly to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, but he said, “There's no guarantee to do anything.”

The municipal league also asked the state agency to convene a local government task force on

saving money from state-mandated services; freeze state funding of economic development initiatives unless there is a signed contract; halt housing evictions; reform bail requirements for people charged with nonviolent, misdemeanor offenses; and amend the budget to allow local governments to restrict attendance at

meetings to comply with a 10-person limit on public gatherings.

Foremost, municipal league Executive Director Michelle Gowdy said she already had asked Northam and Layne “to not jigger” funding formulas for state-mandated local government services, especially K-12

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