



# Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns

**Testimony from Brian M. Daniels, Executive Director  
Governor's FY 2019 Budget Request**

*Article 1 – Quasi-Public Reserve Transfers (Sections 15-16)*

*Article 10 – Quasi-Public Reserve Transfers (Sections 5-9)*

**Senate Committee on Finance – February 6, 2018**

The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns is opposed to the proposed transfer of \$6.0 million from the RI Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) for deficit reduction – \$3.0 million in Fiscal Year 2018 and \$3.0 million in FY 2019.

In 2016, RIRRC enacted an increase to the municipal tipping fee – the amount that cities and towns pay to dispose of solid waste at the Central Landfill. RIRRC approved raising the fee from the rate of \$32/ton to \$39.50 in FY 2018 and then to \$47 in FY 2019 – an increase of 47% over two years. These increases are projected to raise an additional \$2.1 million in FY 2018 and \$4.1 million in FY 2019 – a total of \$6.2 million combined.

Based on our projections, Providence is spending about \$400,000 more on tipping fees in the current fiscal year, and will pay a total of \$700,000 more in FY 2019 than they did two years ago. We estimate that twelve other communities will experience six-digit increases to tipping fee charges in FY 2019 – Bristol, Coventry, Cranston, Cumberland, East Providence, North Providence, Pawtucket, South Kingstown, Warwick, West Warwick, Westerly and Woonsocket.

While our members had serious concerns with the fee increases, they were told by RIRRC leadership that the funds were needed for capital improvements to enhance operational efficiency. The Governor's budget now proposes scooping \$6 million from RIRRC to close the state budget deficit. – nearly the exact amount the higher tipping fees will yield over two years. While our members understand the need to extend the life of the landfill, they object paying more to close the state deficit. For that reason, we oppose the proposed scoop of \$6 million.

We also urge the General Assembly to restore the precedent of putting municipal tipping fees in statute. Otherwise, we are concerned that the board of a quasi-public agency could pass along tipping fee increases to municipalities and their taxpayers with no recourse or accountability.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to share the League's views on this issue.