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City Officials Oppose Lottery Proposal *Devastating Effects Expected from Revenue Reduction*

Wheeling, WV – In response to Governor Earl Ray Tomblin’s proposal to cut lottery appropriations, City of Wheeling officials are going on record to voice their opposition.

As drafted, Senate Bill No. 385 would alter the distribution of lottery revenue and reduce allocations to city and county governments by 15 percent. Municipalities with racetracks, like Wheeling, would be among the areas most affected.

If passed, the bill would translate to an estimated \$250,000 reduction in annual revenue for the City of Wheeling.

“The impact to our budget would be devastating,” City Manager Robert Herron confirms. “The City has serious budget pressures as well. Taking money from the state’s cities and counties to balance the state budget is counterproductive and hurtful to us.”

Wheeling City Council has passed and maintained a balanced budget with its own ups and downs for years. With a potential loss of a quarter-million dollars, Herron explains that “essential city services and critical infrastructure projects would suffer, while the reduction of pension liabilities would slow dramatically as well.”

Mayor Andy McKenzie also opposes the bill, offering, “While I understand first-hand the struggles of state government to balance their budget, I don’t believe our legislators and governor should try to put the burden on the backs of cities and counties across the state.”

SB 385 aims to reduce a funding gap of approximately \$146 million in the 2014-15 budget. However, McKenzie points out that the state isn’t the only government entity with financial challenges.

“Cities and counties in West Virginia continue to have difficulty balancing their budgets with far fewer opportunities to generate additional revenue,” he continues. “I would encourage our legislators and governor to look at other ways to cut the size of government and reduce spending, instead of taking our dollars.”

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