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NEW CASTLE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

For Immediate Release
June 26, 2015

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NEWS RELEASE

Proposed RTT Reduction to Devastate Public Safety
NCCo Urges Citizens to Contact Their State Representatives

Both branches of New Castle County Government stand united in opposition to the proposal to reduce the County share of the Real Estate Transfer Tax (RTT). The Delaware State Joint Finance Committee voted to reduce, by one-third, New Castle County's allocation of the RTT. The loss of revenue will be catastrophic to the citizens of New Castle County with the loss of police, paramedics, and 911 call operators.

"Ninety-four percent of the Real Estate Transfer Tax is used to fund Public Safety in New Castle County" said County Executive Tom Gordon. "The reduction will cause crime to rise and property values to fall."

"Public Safety is the County's number one priority and will be most directly affected by these cuts," Council President Christopher Bullock said. "It will be difficult to maintain our current police department staffing levels without this revenue and it will certainly hamper our ability to protect the nearly 600,000 residents of New Castle County."

Council President Pro Tempore Penrose Hollins concurs. "It is in everyone's best interest for the state and county to work together; we both represent the same people," he said. "When the state places a financial noose around the county it simply forces the county to reduce or eliminate the critical services we provide."

The loss of transfer tax revenue would amount to approximately \$9 million dollars per year.

"The proposed cuts would send this County back into the fiscal crisis of the Great Recession," County Executive Gordon added. "At that time, services were cut and taxes were raised precipitously."

The RTT reduction will be devastating to the Department of Public Safety and, according to New Castle County Police Chief Colonel Elmer Setting, would equate to a reduction of nearly 100 police officers, or nearly one-third of the police force. "This will set our Agency back 10 years and ensure that the criminals gain the upper hand," said Colonel Setting.

“My fear, with this proposed cut, is that someone will call 911 for assistance and there won’t be enough operators to answer the call,” said Chief of Communications Jeffrey Miller.

“The massive reduction in personnel would result in deployment of fewer paramedic units, longer response times, and increased occurrences when paramedic units were not available for additional emergency medical responses,” said Chief Lawrence Tan of the Emergency Medical Services division.

Members of the Administration and Council will continue to lobby against the reductions, which have been added to epilogue language in the State of Delaware’s Fiscal Year 2016 budget.

New Castle County urges its citizens to contact their State Representatives and urge them against adopting any budget that reduces the County’s share of the transfer tax.