

Mr. Chairman, President Cole, Speaker Armstead, Honorable members. I am Jack David Woodrum a commissioner from Summers County currently serving as legislative chairman and board of director's member of the CCAWV as well as a board and legislative member of the WVACo.

This part of the agenda is entitled "County Tax Concerns". I want you to know that county government is onboard and willing to provide input that will help to shape the future role of county, municipal and state government in West Virginia.

It is my opinion that the public and our employees look to us for 3 things; Protection, Order and Direction. There will be challenges and concerns as well as opportunities that present themselves as we contemplate the economic struggles our state faces and as you craft tax reforms. As you consider the future role of counties in West Virginia you may chose to relinquish control of local and regional issues to county governments and enact new statutory authorities to Local Elected Officials. We look forward to developing better more responsive policies with you.

It has been said that with authority comes responsibly. This is true and I believe local government will take up that challenge. However with that said we already have many challenges within our respective communities; Regional Jails and the cost of incarceration, drug and alcohol dependency, crime, economic development both locally and regionally, education, libraries, broadband, dilapidated structures, infrastructure, ambulance and fire services, workforce development and maintenance of existing county properties.

We need the flexibility to address our current issues before we consider additional responsibilities'. At this time counties cannot tolerate additional disruptions of their revenue streams. For the most part we all suffer budget hardships and that in itself is the bases of our "revenue neutral" position on tax reform.

As we move forward we need to do so with the understanding that change affects multiple stakeholders, and that disrupting the status quo will generate discomfort not only in county government but also in state government. To be successful we are going to have to take time to determine what resistance to anticipate and also to sort out what this resistance is trying to protect. By not

~~carefully considering and acknowledging potential resistance to reform you may needlessly sacrifice yourself without achieving your goals for a more prosperous West Virginia.~~

County government is well suited to produce results within the current framework of government today; it functions to deliver the outcomes we currently ask of it. Now that we are formulating change we should ask ourselves, as West Virginia evolves what new competences will be needed in county government? County government will grow as we add additional administrative burdens on it; new employees with different skills will be needed, salaries lines will increase to attract quality employees. There will be a need for additional office space that is in short supply in ageing courthouses. Before these needs can be implemented revenue will have to increase.

In today's local governments many of us struggle to allow our customers to use credit cards to pay their tax's online. The days of "we've always done it this way" and "we've never had to do it before" need to be a thing of the past. Many of our staff and officials will acknowledge the need for change and resist change at the same time. ~~We need to understand their concerns so we can address them~~ and thus provide "Protection, Order and Direction" or I fear we will never move our state forward.

We live in an environment of urgency, high stakes and uncertainty. Legislation often produces a heartfelt emotional response in segments of the population. Reason and logic are not always enough. We need to identify not only partners and allies and who our opposition is but what our opposition has to lose by the change we are proposing.

I believe the best solutions to our states problems will not come from any one level of government but from collaboration between state and local governing bodies, citizens and interests groups.

~~It may take more than a lifetime to achieve the highest and most noble aspirations we have for West Virginia, but the work has already begun and together we are accomplishing something worthwhile every day for the people we serve and the future we strive for in this changing and challenging world.~~ I thank you for allowing me to share my prospective on these issues.