

The Office of Governor M. Jodi Rell



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Governor Rell, Municipal Leaders Discuss Economic Concerns, Strategy

Governor M. Jodi Rell met this morning with several mayors and first selectmen to brief them on the most up-to-date economic forecast for the state, including her plans to cover a \$300 million budget shortfall and her commitment to avoid new taxes and protect municipal aid.

“From our biggest city to our smallest borough – every municipality in this state is feeling the effects of this unstable economy,” Governor Rell said. “The last thing our citizens can afford, especially now, is new taxes on any level – local, state and federal. I am prepared to make tough choices to get Connecticut through these lean times but not at the expense of our hard-pressed families.”

The Governor was joined by a bipartisan group of six top elected officials, who represented municipalities ranging from the state’s largest, Bridgeport, to one of the smallest towns, Roxbury. The group included: Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch; Waterbury Mayor Michael Jarjura; East Hartford Mayor Melody Currey, Vernon Mayor Jason McCoy; Willington First Selectman Michael Eldredge; Roxbury First Selectman Barbara Henry.

The Governor listened to concerns and the challenges towns and cities face daily in the worsening economy. Some municipalities have already frozen spending in an effort to make ends meet and, in many cases, local voters have repeatedly rejected budgets that called for a tax increase.

“We all must find other creative ways to balance our budgets and meet our obligations to our citizens,” Governor Rell said. “The bottom line is that I understand how difficult it is now, and will likely be over the next several months until the financial turmoil begins to settle. I want to assure our municipalities that we intend to get through this together and with as little impact as possible on the citizens we serve.”

Governor Rell said the group discussed several issues including tax collection rates, revaluation and the Governor’s plan to extend a Bond Anticipation Note program that would make it easier for cities and towns to sell bonds for municipal projects.

The Governor told the leaders that the state expects the latest budget deficit estimate to remain fairly firm until January when new revenue projections from quarterly tax estimates are posted. She has already used her executive authority to order more than \$180 million in recissions and will begin meeting with agency commissioners today on those reductions. Governor Rell has called the Legislature back in special session next month to act on her plan to close the rest of the deficit.

“Our municipal leaders are doing the same thing across the state – trying to balance their own budgets while doing their best not to sacrifice services,” Governor Rell. “They understand as well as anyone the hard choices that need to be made over the next several months.”

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