**-- On Tuesday, April 14, the legislature passed a critically needed piece of legislation that will help municipalities respond to the COVID-19 emergency.**

**-- The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors is taking this opportunity to thank the General Assembly for passage of this important legislation and urge the governor to sign it into law immediately.**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Tuesday, April 14, 2020**

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Click here for a photo of David M. Sanko: <http://www.psats.org/subpage.php?pageid=psatsstaff>

**Township Association Applauds Legislature for Passage of Bill to Enhance**

**Townships’ Ability to Respond to COVID-19 Emergency,**

**Urges Gov. Wolf to Sign SB 841**

The following statement was issued today by David M. Sanko, executive director of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), which represents the 1,454 townships of the second class across Pennsylvania. Townships, in turn, represent more residents — 5.5 million Pennsylvanians — than any other type of political subdivision in the commonwealth and cover 95 percent of the commonwealth’s land mass.

“On behalf of the PSATS Executive Board and our member townships, we applaud the Pennsylvania General Assembly for its unanimous passage of a bill that will greatly enhance local governments’ ability to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. We now urge Gov. Tom Wolf to sign the bill into law as soon as possible.

“In this unprecedented crisis, local governments are on the front lines providing for the public health and safety of their citizens while ensuring the continued delivery of critical services and functions.”

Specifically, SB 841 does the following:

* + Clarifies that municipalities may conduct remote meetings for the duration of the COVID emergency.
  + Allows municipalities to adhere to advised safety protocols by placing a temporary hold on permit applications that have statutory “shot clocks” where if they are not acted upon, are deemed approved. Absent this “freezing of the clock” for permits and applications, there could be years of costly and unnecessary litigation during a time when municipalities’ focus should be on rebuilding from this crisis. Local governments do not want to stop these vital operations. They simply want the ability to make decisions on when they can proceed safely.
  + Authorizes local governments to extend the discount period for local property taxes and waive fees and penalties associated with them as long as the taxes are paid in full by December 31, 2020.

“PSATS looks forward to a continued working relationship with the governor and legislature to ensure that local governments have the tools they need to respond properly and comply with the law during these challenging times.”