

MUNICIPAL LEADERS WANT PIECE OF SURPLUS FOR CPA

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STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, JUNE 13, 2019....While a conference committee weighs the idea, more than 100 municipal chief executives wrote to the House speaker and Senate president Wednesday asking that part of any potential fiscal year 2019 budget surplus be transferred to help the Community Preservation Act program.

Leaders from Boston, Quincy, Somerville, Braintree, West Springfield, New Bedford, Salem, Newton, Northampton and more said that the CPA is "no longer the state-local partnership it was designed to be" and highlighted the fact that while the 175 cities and towns that have adopted the CPA have collectively raised approximately \$160 million in local revenue each year, the match from the statewide CPA Trust Fund has dropped to \$24 million.

Though the House and Senate budget both authorized an increase in CPA funding starting next year, the conference committee is considering whether to include in the final budget the Senate's authorization of a transfer up to \$20 million from any potential fiscal 2019 surplus to help towns that have adopted the CPA before the new funding is available in 2020.

"Without this money, the statewide match will be an estimated 11 percent," the 101 municipal officials [wrote in the letter](#) coordinated by the Community Preservation Coalition and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. "This short-term solution for 2019, coupled with the long-term fix for 2020 and beyond, will ensure a viable, vibrant, and enduring CPA."

Through 11 months of fiscal 2019, state tax collections were running \$952 million above year-to-date expectations, the Department of Revenue reported earlier this month.

The idea of the CPA was for the state to match 100 percent of what each participating municipality raised through its own property tax surcharge to preserve open space, renovate historic buildings and parks and to build new playgrounds and athletic fields. But as more communities adopt the CPA, each town's share of the pie has become smaller.

The Senate last month followed the House's lead and [voted to raise the fees](#) that are used to fund the Community Preservation Act in hopes of making what is supposed to be a state-local partnership more equitable. The Senate voted 38-2 to increase the recording fees that feed the CPA Trust Fund from \$20 to \$50 for most documents and from \$10 to \$25 for municipal lien certificates, a change that the Community Preservation Coalition estimates will provide the trust fund with an infusion of \$36 million in new money each year. The House did the same in its budget in April.

END

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