



**Westchester**  
County Association

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*For Immediate Release*

## **Westchester County Association President to Testify Before State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness**

*William M. Mooney, Jr. to Discuss Business Organization's  
Investigation into Property Taxes  
Posing Economic Threat to Westchester*

WHITE PLAINS, NY (NOVEMBER 27, 2007) William M. Mooney, Jr., President of The Westchester County Association (WCA)— the area's preeminent business membership organization— will present testimony to the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness, Wednesday, November 28, at the Bear Mountain Inn and Conference Center.

Mooney will discuss the WCA's Property Tax Reform Commission which was created to investigate Westchester's high property taxes. He said: "We plan to tell state officials that as a business community we are very concerned that the

county's property taxes, ranked among the three highest in the nation, pose a real and present economic threat that needs to be immediately addressed.”

He continued: “Since we released our findings a month ago, it seems like every day we have read about another government entity planning to increase property taxes yet again—in several cases at rates significantly higher than the cost of living. Without getting the property tax burden under control, Westchester’s ability to attract and retain businesses is seriously threatened.”

Alfred B. DelBello, WCA Chair, added: “Our concern is not limited to absolute tax levels but the dated assumptions and organizational policies and designs underlying public sector management and how they impact on Westchester’s competitive advantage as a place to live and work. “

The hearing from 1 to 5 PM is part of Governor Spitzer’s examination of approaches underway by local government to increase efficiency through mergers, consolidation, regionalized government, shared services and smart growth.

Mooney said that the WCA’s investigation into property taxes had highlighted an “outmoded, inequitable and highly inefficient governmental tax system in Westchester. There are 383 taxing entities that cost taxpayers millions of dollars each year in duplicative services. It’s also being burdened by the unnecessary and continuing growth of the public sector and by pension and health care benefits policies that are completely out of sync with today’s economic realities.”

He will also discuss the WCA’s efforts to form an alliance of stakeholders in the private and public sectors that will explore six potential areas for reform: overlapping areas of government, state pension and benefit policies, school taxes, special districts, privatization of infrastructure and transparent and effective tax system. Richard French, Chair of the WCA Property Tax Reform

Commission, noted: “The goal of our recommended alliance is to undertake a collaborative approach among the stakeholders in the public and private sectors to help initiate reforms. Some of the areas the alliance should be focusing on include overlap at the village, town/city and county levels. Our hope is that the alliance will create an effective dialogue and course of action to make some much needed changes.”

A webcast of the proceedings will be available after the hearing on the Commission website, [www.nyslocalgov.org](http://www.nyslocalgov.org).

Mooney’s appearance before the State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness will be the second time in less than two weeks that the WCA has been invited by state authorities to provide testimony on an important policy issue impacting economic vitality statewide. On November 15, members of the WCA Blue Ribbon Task Force on Healthcare Reform met with Attorney General Andrew Cuomo’s staff to discuss their recommendations for reform within the health insurance industry.

AG Cuomo was aware of the work of the Task Force and requested that Task Force members provide his office with their input. Timothy Clune, the Bureau Chief of the Health Care Bureau; Michael Berlin, Deputy Attorney General for Economic Justice and Doris Morin, Assistant Attorney General, Westchester Regional Office, came to the WCA offices to hear first-hand about the task Force’s findings about the market conduct practices of the insurers.

The Westchester County Association ([www.westchester.org](http://www.westchester.org)) is the preeminent business membership organization in Westchester County. The Association is committed to business advocacy, economic vitality and to providing a strong and clear voice for the interests of businesses on the regional, national and international levels. Its key objectives are: promoting positive economic development in the region; fostering business development; and providing its members with access and interaction with key public and private sector individuals, agencies and organizations.