

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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KEY BILLS ADVANCING IN THE HOUSE

The House returned to Harrisburg this week, moving several bills relevant to county governments through committee. Four bills passed out of the House Local Government Committee and advanced to the House Floor for further consideration by the full House.

House Bill 369: Expanding Land Bank Eligibility

House Bill 369, introduced by Rep. Robert Freeman (D-Northampton), removes population thresholds that currently limit which municipalities can establish land banks. By expanding eligibility to municipalities of all sizes, the bill would give more local governments the ability to tackle vacant and abandoned properties through land banks. Counties are included in the definition of "municipalities" for the purpose of this legislation. This bill passed out of House Local Government Committee and is now on second consideration on the House Floor.

House Bill 620: Increasing the Recycling Fee

Sponsored by Rep. Mary Isaacson (D-Philadelphia), **HB 620** amends the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act to increase the recycling fee paid by landfill operators from \$2 to \$5 per ton. The current fee, unchanged for over 30 years, funds county recycling programs, solid waste management, and environmental services. Raising it to \$5 per ton would provide much-needed support to counties facing growing waste management demands. Counties support this legislation, and the bill passed out of House

Local Government, where it sits on second consideration on the House Floor.

House Bill 754: County Pension Flexibility

Sponsored by Rep. Pat Harkins (D-Erie), **HB 754** amends the County Pension Law to allow county pension boards to grant smaller, incremental cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) rather than requiring increases to match the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U). Under current law, if a COLA is granted, it must be retroactive to the last time one was awarded, which can result in unsustainable benefit increases. HB 754 provides flexibility to offer more manageable COLAs, ensuring pension fund solvency while supporting retirees. Counties support this legislation, and the bill passed out of committee, where it sits on second consideration on the House Floor.

House Bill 858: Property Contact Information Registry

Introduced by Rep. Jared Solomon (D-Philadelphia), **HB 858** would require county assessors to maintain a list of real properties, including additional contact information such as phone numbers and email addresses. Counties already maintain property records and mailing addresses, making this an unnecessary and redundant mandate. This bill was amended in committee to remove the \$20 fee that assessors could previously collect per request, creating an unfunded mandate on already burdened assessment offices. Counties are neutral on this bill but expressed concerns, particularly regarding the removal of the fee. The bill passed out of committee with amendments and cleared first consideration on the House floor.

With both the House and Senate set to return next week, additional movement on key legislation affecting counties is expected. CCAP will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as they unfold.

CIVIX CHOSEN FOR NEW ELECTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

On March 5, the Pennsylvania Department of State (DOS) **announced** that Civix has been chosen to implement a new comprehensive election management system for Pennsylvania. This announcement is the result of the Administration's efforts to replace the current Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors (SURE) and other elections-related systems to streamline programs and provide a one-stop-shop for election administration services for DOS and county election offices. Pennsylvania joins over 20 other states in working with Civix to implement an efficient elections system that works for the department, election offices, and voters alike.

The new system will be implemented in phases and is expected to be fully implemented by 2028. The SURE system will be used by the department and county election offices until the transition is completed. According to the announcement, this new system will enhance the accuracy and security of the election system and improve the registration and tracking of ballots for Pennsylvania voters.

In addition to replacing SURE, the new system will replace the following systems used by the department:

- The election night reporting (ENR) system
- The campaign finance system
- Lobbying disclosure registration and reporting systems

Moreover, the new system will offer a public portal that will serve as a centralized location for voters to find support, guidance, and information related to elections. Counties are encouraged by this news and look forward to working with the department to implement this new system.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2025 SPRING CONFERENCE

CCAP successfully concluded its 2025 Spring Conference earlier this week. Spanning three days from Sunday to Tuesday, the conference featured a robust legislative and policy-

focused agenda, including CCAP policy committee meetings that reviewed work plan progress and engaged with key state partners. Attendees had the opportunity to interact with several agency leaders, including Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Jessica Shirley, and Department of Transportation Executive Deputy Secretary Larry Shiflet who addressed the Agriculture Committee, the Energy, Environmental, and Land Use Committee, and the Community and Economic Development Committee, respectively.



Attendees also heard from federal partners, as CCAP President and Indiana County Commissioner Sherene Hess hosted a fireside chat with U.S. Senator Dave McCormick's State Director, Ryan Aument. During the discussion, Aument shared key insights on the Senator's statewide office operations, strategies for counties to collaborate with federal partners on critical issues, and ways to access essential federal resources. Strengthening intergovernmental partnerships between counties and legislators is vital to addressing the pressing challenges facing Pennsylvanians.

In addition, the conference featured a Legislative Reception, providing county leaders from across the Commonwealth with a valuable opportunity to engage directly with members of the General Assembly. We sincerely appreciate the legislators who attended our events and look forward to continuing these important conversations in the months ahead.

New this year, the conference also featured a Hill Day following the Closing General Session. Counties gathered at the Capitol to meet with legislators and advocate for CCAP's three priorities for 2025 – 911 surcharge reauthorization and statute updates, adequate county mental health funding, and vote-by-mail reforms. Additionally, commissioners were honored with a special recognition on the floor of the House of Representatives by Speaker Joanna McClinton.



Thank you to everyone who joined us and worked to make the 2025 CCAP Spring Conference a success! We look forward to our 2025 Annual Conference and Trade Show in August in Somerset County.

DHS RELEASES COUNTY-LEVEL DATA ON MEDICAID AND SNAP ENROLLMENT

The Department of Human Services (DHS) recently released new data on Medicaid and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment across the commonwealth. DHS directly serves more than 3 million Pennsylvanians through these programs, with Medicaid providing coverage to approximately 3 million individuals in every county. Meanwhile, SNAP supports over 2 million residents, offering federally funded benefits to help families meet their nutritional needs.

The newly published data provides a county-by-county breakdown of Medicaid and SNAP usage, offering valuable insights into program participation at the local level. This information, along with additional resources, is available on the [DHS website](#).

IFO ISSUES COUNTY MILLAGE RATES RESEARCH BRIEF

The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) recently released a [research brief](#) analyzing county millage rate trends for 2025, shedding light on the financial pressures counties face as they adapt to rising costs and the expiration of temporary federal aid. The report finds that 35 counties raised millage rates for 2025, with nearly half implementing increases of more than 10%, while 30 counties maintained flat rates after adjusting at some point over the past decade. Over the last ten years, county property tax revenues have grown by 40%, reaching a projected \$4.2 billion in 2025. Counties that conducted reassessment saw a lower overall increase of 29.1% while those that did not reassess experienced a 41.3% rise.

During the pandemic, counties received over \$4.5 billion in one-time federal aid, which temporarily helped offset budget pressures, but with those funds now largely depleted, many counties are adjusting tax structures to maintain essential services. While tax base growth varies between suburban and rural areas, inflation and growing service demands continue to shape county fiscal decisions for the year ahead.

PBDA OPENS SECOND ROUND OF DCTP

The CPF-Digital Connectivity Technology Program, led by the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA), helps expand digital access across Pennsylvania by providing laptops for broadband connectivity, digital literacy, and skills training.

Applications can request between 20 and 200 laptops. The second round of funding is expected to open in March or April 2025, with a 60-day application window.

Who can apply?

- Community Anchor Institutions (CIAs)
- Municipalities and local governments
- Nonprofits
- Previous applications who were unsuccessful
- Previous successful applications who received fewer than 200 laptops

Applications must be submitted through the Electronic Single Application portal. PBDA is hosting two information webinars on **Tuesday March 25** and **Wednesday, April 2**. Program guidelines, FAQs, and more details are available on the [CPF-Digital Connectivity Technology Program webpage](#).

NACO 90th ANNUAL CONFERENCE – REGISTRATION OPEN

The National Association of Counties (NACo) 90th annual conference is coming to Philadelphia from July 11-14, offering a unique opportunity for county leaders to exchange best practices, shape NACo's federal policy agenda, and elect the association's leadership. This year's conference will feature engaging discussions on key issues such as resilience, land use, disaster response, workforce development, behavioral health, and financial management.

With the conference taking place right here in Pennsylvania, we look forward to a strong showing from CCAP members to highlight the leadership and innovation happening across our counties.

For registration and more details about the conference, please visit the [NACo website](#).

CCAP RESOLUTIONS PROCESS

Beginning in May, CCAP policy committees will be holding their annual virtual meetings to consider resolutions amending the [Pennsylvania County Platform](#), CCAP's comprehensive policy document determined by counties. All CCAP members are invited to review the Platform and to send any proposed resolutions for additions, changes or deletions to CCAP Government Relations staff at PACountiesGR@pacounties.org, or to discuss them with CCAP policy committee chairs. A membership discussion and vote on the resolutions will be held in conjunction with the CCAP Annual Conference in early August. An overview of the process, timeline and related materials can be found on the CCAP Policy [webpage](#).

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