

Feb. 27, 2026

Urgent! Engage now on legislation that would 'blow local control to pieces'

"Local control is the principle that government works best when decisions are made closest to where the people live. A package of bills introduced in the Legislature would blow that concept to pieces," warned the *Detroit News* in its Feb. 25 editorial, "Law would blow local control to pieces."



In addition to bills introduced last week in the House, five additional bills were added this week that limit local governments' ability to plan and make local decisions for their community's future. The nine-bill package purports to address the state's housing shortage by restricting local authority and local decisions. Affordable housing is essential across the state, but it should not come at the expense of local input by requiring local governments to follow one-size-fits-all requirements from the state.

MTA needs your voices NOW to share your opposition to this attack on local land use authority and join our efforts to protect local decision-making. Add your signature to [our joint letter of opposition](#)—adding your voice to the more than 1,600 local leaders who have already signed. Also, please contact your [state representative](#) and [state senator](#) today to ask them to oppose this legislation and help ensure residents and locally elected leaders have the freedom to engage in vigorous debate on matters that impact their community every day.

The bills introduced this week include:

- [House Bill 5581](#), sponsored by Rep. Tom Kunse (R-Clare). Prohibits a minimum dwelling area requirement greater than 500 square feet
- [HB 5582](#), sponsored by Rep. Kristian Grant (D-Grand Rapids). Allows mobile homes in any residential area and mandates parking requirements at no more than one space per dwelling unit for multi-family residential use of property.
- [HB 5583](#), sponsored by Rep. Matthew Longjohn (D-Portage). Mandates setback requirements at 15 feet or less from the front property line and five feet from the sides and rear for dwellings or outbuildings if the local unit of government is **located in whole or part within a Metropolitan Statistical Area** (MSA, determined by decennial census) or is **located adjacent to a MSA area**. There are currently 16 MSAs in the state, with 662 townships located within or adjacent to an MSA.

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UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

March 10: **FREE** live Q&A, 11 AM [The Compliance Countdown: Is Your Website Ready?](#)

March 17: [2026 MTA Capital Conference](#)

March 18: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar [Squeaky Wheel Maintenance: Using Policies to Turn Complaints into Constructive Input](#)

April 20-23: Registration is open for [MTA's 2026 Annual Educational Conference & Expo](#) at the Grand Traverse Resort

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Allows 25-foot setback only from a wetland, inland lake or stream, or ordinary high water mark of a Great Lake or Lake St. Clair.

- [HB 5584](#), sponsored by Rep. Joey Andrews (D-St. Joseph Chtr. Twp.). Creates a statewide definition of “duplex” and mandates duplexes be a permitted use in any district where single-family residences are allowed.
- [HB 5585](#), sponsored by Rep. Luke Meerman (R-Polkton Chtr. Twp.). Mandates that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) be permitted by right in residential zoning districts and **not subject to a public hearing**. Also permits mobile homes be located in any residential area and that ADUs be prohibited from density calculations, additional parking requirements and owner occupancy requirements.

The five bills were referred to the House Government Operations Committee. It is also anticipated the previously introduced bills—[HB 5529](#), [HB 5530](#) and [HB 5531](#)—will next be considered by the House Government Operations Committee as soon as next week. Read those bill summaries [here](#).

The legislation does not consider the full scope of factors impacting attainable housing, including labor shortages, rising labor, material and land costs, and state mandates, and instead places the blame solely on local governments. We ask lawmakers to instead work toward a true, comprehensive solution to help resolve the housing shortage.

MTA asks you to engage **now to voice your opposition**. As locally elected and appointed officials, we must be united and advocate with legislators to ensure land use planning remains a local decision. You can also visit [MTA's website](#) for additional details on the legislation and co-sponsors, and for more information, including a video of [a press conference](#) where MTA, southeast Michigan local leaders and organizations representing local government voiced their opposition.

Ban on foreign donations for election administration and ballot questions advances

Two bills limiting contributions from foreign nationals in elections passed the House this week. [House Bill 5198](#), sponsored by Rep. William Bruck (R-Erie Twp.), would require a person entering into an agreement to provide support for election administration to certify annually with the Secretary of State (SOS) whether they are knowingly a recipient of foreign donations. Local governments would be prohibited from entering into or continuing agreements with a person for election administration support if the person fails to provide the SOS with the accurate certificate. [HB 5197](#), introduced by Rep. Rachelle Smit (R-Wayland Twp.), would ban contributions from foreign nationals to support the qualification, passage or defeat of a ballot question. The bill prescribes civil fines for ballot question committees that do not return prohibited contributions within 30 days and foreign nationals who make contributions toward ballot questions



* [Bauckham, Thall, Seeber Kaufman & Koches PC](#)

* [Consumers Energy](#)

* [Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

* [Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC](#)

* [Hartleb Agency](#)

* [ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

* [Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, P.C.](#)

* [Mika Meyers, PLC](#)

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directly or indirectly through a third party. The bills advance to the Senate for further consideration.



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MTA opposes bill limiting all millage proposals to November ballot

MTA opposed legislation this week before the House Elections Integrity Committee that would limit millage proposals to only the November general election ballot. [House Bill 4583](#) would require that a proposal by a local taxing unit to impose, renew or increase a property tax millage only be submitted to voters at the November regular election date. This would require all millage proposals for townships, cities, villages, counties, school districts, intermediate school districts, community college districts and local authorities be placed on one ballot. The bill could be considered next week by the committee.

Stay informed—Register for MTA's 2026 Capital Conference today

With the housing, zoning and property tax issues at the forefront, it is more important than ever for you to attend [MTA's 2026 Capital Conference](#). Join us in Lansing to engage in critical discussions on the current legislation that will affect both your township's decision-making for your community and your township's funding for years to come. You will also get insight on what's coming and learn how these state-level proposals impact your township. The event puts you in the room with decision-makers shaping Michigan's future—legislators, state departments and MTA policy experts. You'll gain the knowledge, clarity and tools you need to navigate the evolving policy landscape and better position your township. Discover how you can [benefit from attending](#) and engage, advocate and influence the legislative issues impacting townships in 2026. **Learn more about [MTA's 2026 Capital Conference](#) and register before the regular rate ends on March 3!**





Kyle Shumaker



The Compliance Countdown: 🕒 Is Your Website Ready?

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New Michigan Assessors record retention schedule available

A new record retention schedule, [General Schedule #41—Michigan Assessors](#), has been approved by the State of Michigan, and is now available. The schedule, approved on Feb. 17, covers records for the assessing office, board of review, exemptions, personal property and property card, and more. Approved schedules provide the only legal authority to destroy public records. If a record is not covered by an approved schedule, it cannot be legally destroyed and must be kept permanently. Townships do not need to take any action to adopt adopted state record retention schedules. Learn more about records management and find links to retention schedules on MTA's ["Records Management and Retention Schedules" webpage](#) (member login is required).

STC releases draft DNR PILT roll, interest rate and millage requests and rollbacks bulletins

The State Tax Commission (STC) annually determines the valuation of state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) property and furnishes those valuations to local assessing units where the property is located. Assessors can review the [Memorandum Regarding DRAFT DNR PILT Roll](#) and [Draft 2026 DNR PILT Roll](#) and submit comments to TREAS-DNRPILT@michigan.gov by March 16.

The STC also approved and released [Bulletin 1 of 2026](#) on 4th quarter certified interest rates and [Bulletin 2 of 2026](#) on millage requests and rollbacks this week.

EGLE webinar explores contracting and ordinances for materials management success

The next Catalyst Communities webinar from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) will highlight clear ordinances and well-structured contracts for recycling and materials management programs. This webinar, designed for local leaders, requires [registration](#) and is scheduled for March 12 at 10:30 a.m.

PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE

MTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO
APRIL 20-23, 2026
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Reminders for clerks

- **Combining precincts for the May consolidated election:** The **March 6** deadline for temporary precinct consolidations for the May election is rapidly approaching. Clerks should review typical voter activity to determine the appropriate number of precincts for the May election.
- **EDARP training:** All electronic ballots to military and overseas voters must now be sent through the Electronic Delivery and Return Portal (EDARP) system, which requires training before system access can be granted. Two training opportunities will be held on **March 11**, at **10 a.m.** and **2 p.m.** The sessions are identical and space is limited, so clerks should only sign up for one session, in the state Bureau of Elections [eLearning Center](#).

MTA April workshops offer practical training on targeted topics

Join us on April 20 for five in-person courses offering practical training on critical township functions, and providing tools and guidance you can put to work right away. Advance registration is required and space may be limited, so don't wait—[register today!](#)

- [Defining Your Township's Land Use Future](#)—A full-day session exploring the critical issues shaping your township's land use decisions, from balancing property rights with the public interest to ensuring your master plan is up-to-date, to addressing emerging development pressures. Valid for six credits in MTA's [Township Governance Academy](#).
- [Assessors Renewal: Leadership by Design](#)—Assessors can sharpen leadership skills and administrative strategies to enhance assessing operations and professional effectiveness at this half-day course, valid for four hours of assessing continuing education credit.
- [Understanding Assessing Basics](#)—Build or refresh your foundational knowledge of property valuation, compliance requirements, and essential assessing functions at this full-day class, which also meets the biennial State Tax Commission training requirement for non-certified assessing staff.
- [Mapping the Money: Strengthening & Streamlining Financial Oversight](#)—Improve internal controls, oversight processes and financial accountability within your township.
- [Legal Institute for Township Attorneys](#)—Designed specifically for township attorneys, this full-day institute helps you stay current on legal developments, emerging issues and best practices impacting the Michigan townships you serve.

These sessions are being held in conjunction with [MTA's 2026 Annual Conference & Expo](#), at the Grand Traverse Resort April 20-23. You do not have to attend the main conference to take part in these educational opportunities.

Federal updates for week of Feb. 24

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships [Weekly Legislative Update](#) for the latest on federal actions impacting townships.



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