

Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

May 10, 2024

House passes budget bill to provide statutory revenue sharing for ALL townships



Funding to restore statutory revenue sharing for all townships was approved by a 56-49 vote by the House this week as part of an appropriations budget bill. [House Bill 5516](#), sponsored by Rep. Felicia Brabec (D-Pittsfield Chtr. Twp.), would increase statutory revenue sharing funding to those currently eligible AND ensure that 1,091 townships that have not received funding for nearly 1.5 decades are back in the funding measure. The bill would designate 8% of the 4% sales tax to a Revenue Sharing Trust Fund (*the first 2% of the 6% sales tax is dedicated to schools*), resulting in a 7.6% increase over the current year. The new townships and villages eligible would receive an allocation on a per-capita basis and all current recipients would see an increase in their base funding. MTA encourages members to thank those [state representatives who supported passage of HB 5516](#).

The Senate is expected to pass [Senate Bill 760](#), sponsored by Sen. John Cherry (D-Flint), next week. SB 760 dedicates 9.1% of the 4% sales tax to a Revenue Sharing Trust Fund and allocates \$662.4 million for statutory revenue sharing—a 20.5% increase over current-year funding. In the coming weeks, the Legislature intends to adopt finalized budget. The Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference is scheduled for May 17, after which the Legislature will set new targets for their budgets, and negotiations between the House and the Senate will begin. The Legislature is on pace to have a final version of the budget passed by the end of June.

MTA testifies on two bills in state voting rights package

This week, MTA staff testified with concerns and questioned provisions in two of the four bills (as shared in *Township Insights*

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last week) that would create a “State Voting Rights Act.” During the second hearing on this package, the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee focused on [Senate Bill 401](#), sponsored by Sen. Darrin Camilleri (D-Brownstown Twp.), and [SB 403](#), sponsored by Sen. Stephanie Chang (D-Detroit). SB 401 would prohibit a local government from imposing any law, practice, policy or method of election that leads to a disparity in voter participation between members of a protected class and other members of the electorate, or that would impair the ability of a protected class to participate in the political process or otherwise influence the outcome of an election. It would also establish court proceedings for violations of the act as well as prescribe a process for local governments to remedy violations with approval from the Secretary of State (SOS). It further would require the courts to oversee the implementation of election laws or policies proposed by any local government that had a history of violating voting rights for 10 years. SB 403 would require local governments that meet a certain threshold of voters with limited English proficiency to provide language assistance for elections.

While acknowledging considerable improvements have been made to the bills since introduction, the majority of MTA’s testimony focused on potential implications, frivolous or nuisance complaints, legal challenges and costs, as well as the increased pressure on local election officials. MTA is committed to voter rights and ballot access and to identifying gaps in the process, as well as balancing the burdens placed on our local clerks, and continues to be willing to work on this legislation. However, while these bills are well-intentioned, they have the potential of paralyzing local units from making necessary ministerial decisions in the best interests of their voters, in fear of soliciting costly lawsuits and damaging public trust in our electoral process.



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Trust fund projects approved

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Funding for 19 township projects, included in the 53 projects recommended by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board, is one step closer to approval. [Senate Bill 817](#), sponsored by Sen. John Cherry (D-Flint) and supported by MTA, provides \$27.3 million in matching funds for 18 acquisition projects and 35 development projects. The appropriation bill was approved by the House this week and will be returned to the Senate for presentation to the governor.

MTA delegation meets with Michigan congressional members

MTA took the township message to the nation's capital this week, as members of the MTA Board joined Executive Director Neil Sheridan for the National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT) America's Town Meeting and Legislative Fly-in. The MTA delegation met with Michigan congressional members including U.S. Reps. John Moolenaar (R-2nd) and Jack Bergman (R-1st) and legislative directors and staff for Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D) and Reps. Bill Huizenga (R-4th) Tim Walberg (R-5th), Elissa Slotkin (D-7th), Dan Kildee (D-8th), John James (R-10th) and Haley Stevens (D-11). Joining Sheridan, who is NATaT president, were 2024 MTA President **Connie Cargill, Golden Township** (Oceana Co.) treasurer; MTA 1st Vice President and District 5 Director **Harold Koviak, Burt Township** (Cheboygan Co.) supervisor; MTA 2nd Vice President and District 16 Director **Kevin Beeson, Pine River Township** (Grafton Co.) supervisor; MTA Secretary and District 8 Director **Marvin Radtke Jr., Green Lake Township** supervisor (Grand Traverse Co.); and **Bangor Charter Township** (Bay Co.) Supervisor **Glenn Rowley**, MTA District 13 director and Executive Committee member-at-large.



The local leaders discussed key issues of importance to Michigan townships and towns and townships across the nation, such as increasing transportation and infrastructure priorities, including access to broadband and bridging the digital divide, also included in the U.S. Farm Bill. Additional Farm Bill priorities include support for USDA Rural Development programs and funding for rural capacity building and preparedness. The group also advocated for federal housing assistance for qualified volunteer first responders.

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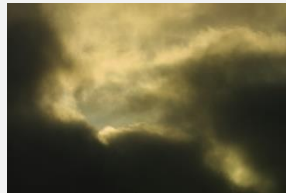
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All township millage proposals on ballot on May 7 approved

While there were only 11 township millage proposals before voters on May 7, all received local approval Tuesday. The majority of the proposals were for public safety but also included proposals for roads, bike paths, senior services and insect control in the seven townships.

Resources can help townships, residents 'weather the storm'

With severe storms causing devastating damage in southwest Michigan this week, and such storms on the rise, townships and their residents are reminded of state resources that can help prepare for and respond to weather emergencies.



- The [MIReady Webpage](#) provides resources to help residents prepare for emergencies like natural disasters, homeland security threats, and power outages. MiReady resources focus on protecting residents, their homes, family and pets—whether you are at home or on the road.
- The state Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) [Storm Recovery Webpage](#) provides resources that help local officials, emergency responders, recycling and disposal vendors, and residents respond to storm emergencies. It provides details on [managing storm debris](#), [how to stay informed during an emergency](#), and [how to get an emergency disposal permit](#) in the aftermath of a storm.
- Local officials, disposal and recycling vendors, and emergency responders are encouraged to use

EGLE's NEW [Storm Debris Planning Tool](#) before a storm occurs, to troubleshoot how to remove excess waste during an emergency, preventing a nuisance, public health threat, or environmental threat. Typical scenarios for emergency disposal authorizations include establishing a new staging area for temporarily storing excess waste prior to disposal or allowing longer operating hours for an authorized transfer, processing or disposal facility.

Grants available to increase access to food waste diversion

Townships, planning agencies and municipal solid waste and recovery authorities are among the entities that can submit a [request for proposals](#) for grant funding to the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy's Organics Infrastructure Grants program to increase access to food waste diversion and increase the state's food waste composting and recycling rate. Eligible proposals include but are not limited to implementing curbside food waste carts, creating or enhancing drop-off food waste collection, public-space food waste collection containers, school food waste collection and processing, food waste collection vehicles, multifamily food waste collection projects, and food waste processing projects. Ineligible projects include household hazardous waste projects, electronic waste recycling projects, scrap tire recycling projects, and one-day collection events. Apply by Aug. 28. Questions about the RFP should be directed to TaylorA45@Michigan.gov. Any written answers to questions, changes, and/or clarifications will be posted at Michigan.gov/MIRecycles.

Election reminders

Voter history updates. Townships should update voter history for the May 7 election immediately after the election and no later than Monday, May 13. In addition to maintaining orderly election records and updating voter status, proper recording of voting history provides voters with verification and confidence that their ballot was counted.

August election ballot wording deadline. May 14, at 4 p.m., is the deadline for ballot wording of proposals qualified to appear on August ballot to be certified to local or county clerks.

Clerks on the ballot. Clerks who are candidates on the ballot must balance their roles as an election administrator and as a candidate. While, in general, candidates cannot stay in an early voting site or at the precinct longer than it is necessary to cast their vote, clerks also have a duty to be available at the opening and closing of the polls and must be available to resolve issues or provide guidance. Clerks who are also candidates should take care not to linger in any early voting site or precinct beyond the time necessary to carry out their election administrator duties to ensure that their presence cannot be interpreted as campaigning or influencing voters, yet they must still carry out their election administrator responsibilities despite their status as a candidate on the ballot.



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MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

Federal update for week of May 6

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



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