

# Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

May 17, 2024

## State general fund revenues up

State revenue for the current and next few fiscal years was revised slightly upward at the Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference (CREC) today. The [revisions](#) provide an increase from the last CREC held in January 2024. For the current fiscal year, General Fund revenues are up \$351 million from the January consensus estimate while School Aid Fund revenues are expected to be \$163 million less. CREC establishes an official economic forecast of major variables of the national and state economies, as well as a forecast of anticipated state revenues. Economists from the House Fiscal Agency, Senate Fiscal Agency and state Department of Treasury presented their economic and revenue forecasts for fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26. CREC sets the revenue estimates for the governor and the Legislature as they work to finalize the state's FY 2024-25 budget.



## Senate passes budget that provides statutory revenue sharing for ALL townships

Funding to restore statutory revenue sharing for all townships was approved by a [20-16 vote](#) by the Senate this week as part of an appropriations budget bill. [Senate Bill 760](#), sponsored by Sen. John Cherry (D-Flint), 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. Both SB 760 and [House Bill 5516](#), which passed the House last week, 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. In the coming weeks, the Legislature intends to finalize the FY 2024-25 budget. MTA encourages members to thank those [state senators who support the passage of SB 760](#).

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Now You Know lunchtime webinar:

June 5: [Blight Buster](#)

[The ABCs of the ZBAs:](#)

May 22: [Frankenmuth](#)

May 29: [Kalamazoo](#)



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## Bill to modify term of office for township officials approved by committee

**Beginning in 2025**, all terms for township officers would commence at noon on Dec. 1 following the officer’s election under legislation approved by the House Elections Committee this week. [House Bill 5699](#), sponsored by Rep. Penelope Tsernoglou (D-East Lansing), is part of a four-bill package that would move the beginning of the term of office for newly elected township, city and village officials to Dec. 1. The date change is being proposed to assure individuals do not take the oath of office prior to certification of the election. The bill would not change the current requirement that a township officer shall hold office until a successor is elected and qualified, but not beyond Jan. 1 following the election. The legislation will next be considered by the full House. MTA worked with the bill sponsor to ensure the date was no later than Dec. 1 and is neutral on the legislation. Again, HB 5699 would impact township officers elected **after Dec. 31, 2024**.

## Testimony and work continue on state voting rights act proposal

This week, the Senate Elections and Ethics Committee continued its third week of testimony on the proposed State Voting Rights bills. The committee took up [Senate Bill 402](#), sponsored by Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), and [SB 404](#), sponsored by Sen. Erika Geiss (D-Taylor). SB 402 would create a state Voting and Elections Database Institute to make publicly available elections and voting data throughout the state for the purpose of research, training and



### [Election Prep: Beyond the Bureau:](#)

- June 17: [White Cloud](#)
- June 18: [Kalamazoo](#)
- June 19: [Frankenmuth](#)
- June 25: [Marquette](#)
- June 26: [Live Virtual](#)
- June 27: [Gaylord](#)

### MTA QUICK LINKS

- [Answer Center](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Advocacy](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
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education. One argument presented in support of the bill was that individuals seeking election data would be able to have it readily available from the institute. SB 404 would codify curbside voting assistance, allow voters to bring an individual with them to the polling place to assist with voting, and allow food, drink and entertainment to be provided to voters waiting to vote. The two bills are tie-barred to the main bill in the package, [SB 401](#), sponsored by Sen. Darrin Camilleri (D-Brownstown Twp.), which is opposed by MTA in its current form.

In addition to provisions of the legislation shared previously in *Township Insights*, SB 401 would add large fines for new notice requirements if a local unit failed to comply. Currently, fines are rarely assessed against local governments under the Michigan Election Law. MTA also raised concern regarding some factors that a court may consider in determining a violation, such as discrimination in a community that is in vicinity of that local government. MTA has stressed that the court should be required to consider the intent of the local government, the history of violations and the severity of the violations when determining 10-year sanctions. The sanctions would require court pre-approval of any changes to election policy (polling and drop-box locations, precinct changes, etc.) or for a monitor to be appointed for up to 10 years for violations related to the rights of disabled voters.

Additional discussions are ongoing on the legislation and MTA will continue to update our members.

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## **MPSC hosts fifth stakeholder engagement meeting on renewable siting, MTA model ordinance paused**

Discussions continued this week as the Michigan Public Service Commission held its fifth stakeholder meeting on implementation of PA 233, the renewable energy and energy storage facility siting requirements. The meeting consisted of a panel discussion on farmland preservation including topics such as prime farmland, pollinator habitats, agrivoltaics, and related issues following by review of [Staff Draft Straw Proposals on Decommissioning Plans and Decommissioning Agreements](#). Informal comments on these draft straw proposals are requested by May 28. A link to the meeting, along with other previous draft straw proposals are available at [Renewable Energy and Energy Storage Facility Siting](#).

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

[\\* Consumers Energy](#)

[\\* Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

[\\* Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.](#)

[\\* Hartleb Agency](#)

[\\* ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

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

[\\* Mika Meyers, PLC](#)



MTA's model compatible renewable energy ordinance (CREO) remains on hold as the Association and its legal counsel review MPSC's recently released draft guidance. MTA will share the model CREO and model application once necessary changes are made; watch for an eblast on availability, as well as *Township Insights* and our website. Once MPSC releases final guidance, MTA and its legal counsel anticipate additional changes will be required.

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## Bill would modify downtown district definition

Townships that have more than one separate geographic area—on the mainland and one or more islands with a body of water between the two separate and distinct areas—could soon have statutory clarification to include an island's downtown in their downtown development authority. [Senate Bill 700](#), sponsored by Sen. Kevin Hertel (D-St. Clair Shores), would allow a municipality's downtown district to include an island's downtown if water were between the island's and mainland's downtowns. This would enable the municipalities to expand the coverage of their downtown development authorities, which use tax increment financing to fund improvements to buildings or infrastructure within downtown districts. The bill's expansion would help attract businesses to the additional districts, finance desired projects, and enable the community to access grants previously unavailable to them. The bill now moves to the full Senate for consideration.

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## Join MTA for a deep dive into new elections requirements

Early voting, absent voter ballots, new storage and security requirements—oh my! Township clerks and deputies have a lot of new hurdles to navigate this year when it comes to your township

elections. One thing that hasn't changed: MTA is here to help! We're hosting an afternoon class, *Election Prep: Beyond the Bureau* this June at five locations around the state. Can't make the date or prefer the convenience of online learning? Join us online or watch a recorded version later at your convenience (or both). So, grab your deputy and join MTA's resident election experts (and former clerks) Cindy Dodge and Judy Bigney, as we explore the latest in elections. [Get the details and a registration form here](#) or [register online now](#).

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### **Webinar on cybersecurity for Michigan's drinking water and wastewater utilities**



Township officials and employees that provide drinking water and wastewater utilities can [register to attend](#) free virtual training. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Water Infrastructure and Cyber Resilience Division is partnering with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to offer an [Overview and Tabletop Exercise for Water and Wastewater Utilities](#) on June 20, 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

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### **Reminders from BOE**

**Presidential primary reimbursement.** Clerks have until **May 27, 2024**, to electronically submit a [reimbursement form](#) for expenses attributable to the Feb. 27 presidential primary. [Reimbursement Guidelines for the 2024 Presidential Primary](#) and the form are available in the state Bureau of Elections (BOE) [eLearning Center](#). The deadline is set by statute; any forms received after this date cannot be processed.

**Drop box inspection and video monitoring.** Beginning Thursday, May 23, drop boxes must be regularly inspected to ensure compliance with drop box requirements. Video monitoring for any drop box purchased and installed after Oct. 1, 2020, must also begin on this date. For more information, see [Drop Box Resources playlist in the eLearning Center](#).

**2024 election cycle training.** The BOE will be offering in-person 2024 Election Cycle Preparation Training in all of Michigan’s 83 counties. These three-hour sessions are designed to assist county and local election officials with preparations for the August primary and November general elections, focusing on election procedure changes, election resources, and lessons learned from previous election cycles. The session is a **mandatory** component of required 2024-25 Continuing Education for election administrators and is open to all clerks and deputy clerks. Sessions are expected to run between May 22 and June 24. [Sign up in the eLearning Center](#). If you are unable to attend the class scheduled in your county, you can sign up for a class in a different county.

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### **MIC launches improved project portal**

The Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) launched the [MIC Project Portal 2.0](#) (MiDIG)—an online tool intended to foster collaboration between public and private infrastructure asset managers early in the project cycle. The goal is to facilitate a “dig once” approach to help dig less and achieve more from future infrastructure investments. This approach aims to minimize disruption and cost associated with infrastructure projects by coordinating the installation of various utility lines (broadband, water, energy) during a single construction cycle.

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### **Climate Justice Challenge offers grants, technical assistance for locals**

Townships that partner with community-based organizations are eligible to compete for up to \$11 million in grant and technical assistance funding to maximize federal investments in Michigan from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s \(EPA\) Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants](#) (CCG). These resources will support addressing environmental and climate justice challenges in communities across the state. Community-based organizations can apply for match funding to support applications to the CCG. The CCG program makes funding available to community-based organizations to implement projects that combat climate change, increase resiliency in communities and address historical environmental injustices. Interested applicants can request access to Climate Justice Challenge funding through [this portal](#) *before* submitting their official application and prior to **July 1, 2024**. More information is available at [EPA Community Change Grants](#).

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## Get a grip on blight with MTA's June webinar

Is your community one of the many that are plagued by blight? Regardless of size or geographic location, blight impacts nearly every township, and will only grow if left unaddressed. Don't worry—MTA can help! Join us on June 5 at noon for **Blight Busters**, a one-hour webinar, taught by MTA legal counsel, that will provide tried-and-true tips on both removing and preventing blight in your township. [Click here to register online now!](#)

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## Federal update for week of May 13

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

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