

House passes bills to repeal solar/wind siting law

Bills to repeal Public Act 233 of 2023 and return siting of utility-scale renewable energy facilities to local units of government



passed the House on a partisan vote (58-48) this week. [House Bills 4027](#) and [4028](#), sponsored by Rep. Greg Alexander (R-Washington Chtr. Twp.), would restore local siting authority over large-scale renewable energy projects. MTA thanks the sponsor and the representatives who supported HBs 4027 and 4028 to restore the principal of local control and the voice of the people. The bills now move to the Senate where they face an uncertain future.

Proposed increase in statutory revenue sharing approved by Senate subcommittee

Statutory revenue sharing for all townships, cities and villages would increase by 10% under the Senate General Government Subcommittee's recommendation for FY 2026. [Senate Bill 173](#), sponsored by Sen. John Cherry (D-Flint), would distribute the increased funds through the three-factor formula that was implemented in the current fiscal year. The current-year appropriation provided statutory revenue sharing to ALL townships for the first time in nearly two decades.

The appropriation recommendation also includes language that would enable the state to withhold revenue sharing dollars if it was determined a local unit did not provide protections under the 5th and 14th amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

Additionally, a new initiative, the Community Crime Reduction Initiative, is proposed, which would assist local units in reducing crime. Under the proposal, grants would be awarded to eligible units with \$60 million for counties and \$40 million to *eligible* townships, cities and villages. To be eligible, a township, city or village would have to have a population of 7,500 or more and a per capita taxable value of \$45,000 or less. This initiative is an alternative to the Public Safety and Violence Prevention Fund legislation passed recently by the House. SB 173 next advances to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration.

Bills prohibit sanctuary policies

The House approved legislation this week that would prohibit townships and other local governments from enacting sanctuary policies. [House Bill 4338](#), sponsored by Rep. Cam Cavitt (R-Mullett Twp.) would prohibit a local unit of government from enacting or

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enforcing a law, ordinance, policy or rule that limits or prohibits a peace officer or local official, officer or employee from communicating or cooperating with appropriate federal officials concerning the immigration status of an individual in Michigan. Language was added to permit a local unit to recover court costs and attorney fees if no violation existed.

Additionally, [HB 4342](#), sponsored by Rep. James DeSana (R-Ash Twp.), would amend the Revenue Sharing Act to require the state treasurer to withhold payments from a township, city, village or county that enacts or enforces a law, ordinance, policy or rule that violates HB 4338. This requirement would begin with the 2025-26 state fiscal year. The bills now move to the Senate.



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DNR Trust Fund bill moves to full House

Funding for 20 township projects, included in 85 projects recommended by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board, was approved by the House Appropriations Committee this week. [House Bill 4392](#), sponsored by Rep. Ken Borton (R-Hayes Twp.), provides \$41.8 million in matching funds for 17 land acquisition projects and 68 land development projects. The committee added an amendment ensuring land would not be used for solar or wind projects. The bill will next be considered by the full House.

Bill to create noise abatement measure program

Legislation to establish a noise abatement measure program and a Noise Abatement Measure Fund was approved by a House committee this week. [House Bill 4084](#), sponsored by Rep. Ron Robinson (R-Utica) and supported by MTA, would create a framework for the noise abatement measure program to eventually provide funding to construct and maintain noise abatement measures along state trunk line highways where no such measures currently exist. Under the bill, the Michigan Department of Transportation would be required to construct or maintain noise abatement measures at the request of local authorities and/or provide grants or loans to local road authorities for the construction or maintenance of such measures. Measures to reduce highway noise in areas adjacent to a highway would include a sound wall, earth berm or pavement texturing that reduces highway noise through such methods as overlaying or grinding. The bill will next be considered by the House.

Ice storm aftermath: MPSC forum, debris

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disposal sites

- The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) will host a [forum and listening session](#) on May 21 from 6-8 p.m. at Ellison Place in Gaylord to review the response to the catastrophic ice storm that heavily damaged the power grid and left thousands without power. This meeting, which will only have an in-person option to participate, will provide affected residents with the opportunity to share what worked well and what went wrong in the aftermath of the devastating storm with the state's utility regulatory authority, local leaders and utility providers.
- The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has opened 17 [public debris disposal sites](#) to serve the 12-county disaster area as cleanup efforts continue. The DNR has asked for assistance reminding affected residents that to prevent the spread of invasive pests and tree diseases, it is important to use any firewood created by the storm on-site or locally and take advantage of the public debris disposal sites. It is unlawful to dump or dispose of debris on public lands or property.



Reminders for clerks

The state Bureau of Elections (BOE) offered the following reminders for the May 6 election:

- BOE support will be available May 5 (8 a.m. to 7 p.m.) and May 6 (6 a.m. to 10 p.m.)
- Emergency requests for absent voter (AV) ballots may be made up until 4 p.m. on Election Day. The emergency must occur after 5 p.m. May 2.
- All townships may begin processing and tabulating AV ballots on May 5, which is also the deadline (at 4 p.m.) for electors who lost their AV ballot or have not yet received ballot to submit request to spoil and receive new AV ballot in the clerk's office.

May 30 is the deadline to submit an application and supporting document for the Federal Election Security Grant to cover costs incurred between Oct. 1, 2024, through post-election activities until Feb. 28, 2025. Review the 2024 Security Costs Reimbursement Program summary in the BOE's e-Learning.

Federal updates for week of April 28

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



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