

Don't silence local voices to achieve renewable energy goals

Legislation will be introduced in early September to **eliminate ALL local authority** over the location and permitting of utility-scale wind and solar facilities in communities. The legislation would move the permitting of utility-scale renewable energy facilities from the local level to the Michigan Public Service Commission. MTA strongly opposes any efforts to silence the voices of local officials and residents over issues that have real, long-lasting impacts in their communities. While these can be incredibly contentious in some areas of the state, the answer is not to create a one-size-fits-all approach. MTA understands the need, and the desire, for renewable energy—and many townships across the state are already home to renewable energy facilities—by their choice. MTA needs your help to ensure that communities and Michiganders keep their voice on these important local decisions. MTA asks members to begin conversations with their state representative and senator on the need to retain your township's role in the process. A survey was emailed to all supervisors on Aug. 31, asking for details on utility-scale renewable energy facilities in your township. **Please complete the survey by Sept. 8**, even if your township does not currently have any such facilities. This information will help us to better advocate on behalf of townships on this important issue. Watch our publications for more information once the legislation is introduced.

BOE early voting focus group, tool

The state bureau of elections (BOE) is working to gather and develop early voting tools and information, as clerks and election administrators prepare for this new requirement, starting with the 2024 presidential primary.

- The bureau is hosting four clerk focus group meetings in the upcoming weeks to discuss early voting procedures and forms. Dates and locations are: **Sept. 6**, Livingston County; **Sept. 7**, Grand Traverse County; **Sept. 14**, Ottawa County; and a virtual session on **Sept. 15**. Clerks can watch BOE updates for further details.
- The BOE is developing an early voting tool, similar to the current electronic pollbook, that will include the necessary elements to run an efficient and effective early voting site, including live connectivity and real-time updates, expanded region management and ballot on-demand recording. Questions about the tools can be emailed to electiondata@michigan.gov.

MSHDA announces funding opportunities for communities

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**. Townships looking to create housing programs that benefit low- and moderate-income households may be interested in pursuing [CDBG Housing Improving Local Livability \(CHILL\) Program](#) grants. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) is accepting [Letters of Intent \(LOI\)](#) for program proposals until 11:59 p.m. **Sept. 25**. Townships and other local governments not receiving a direct allocation of CDBG funds from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are eligible to receive funding to rehabilitate or preserve affordable housing units or to remove blight and create single-family housing for resale to income eligible

buyers. LOIs will be used to establish a pool of eligible applicants, who will then be asked to complete a full application.

- **Neighborhood Enhancement Program.** Up to \$2 million in MSHDA funding is available through the [Neighborhood Enhancement Program](#) for activities directly tied to the stabilization and enhancement of Michigan’s rural communities and urban neighborhoods. The deadline to apply is **Oct. 30**.

Assessor certification requirement updates from the STC

The State Tax Commission (STC) released updates this week on assessor certification, including:

- [2024 Township and City Guidelines](#). If a township required Michigan master assessing officer level certification for 2023, it will continue to require an assessor of the same level until it can show a decrease in state equalized value for two consecutive years. The process and conditions for an assessor or local unit to request a required certification level waiver was also approved; the waiver submission deadline is **Oct. 31**.
- [Bulletin 8 of 2023—Assessor Certification](#). To recertify for 2025, assessors must complete 16 hours of continuing education between Nov. 1, 2023, and Oct. 31, 2024. Eight hours can be completed online. **In addition to the 16 hours of continuing education**, assessing officers will need to complete (online or in person) the 2024 *STC Updates Course* to recertify for 2025. Michigan certified assessing technicians must complete four hours of continuing education to recertify. A list of approved assessor continuing education classes will be available after Sept. 14, on the commission’s website.
- [Bulletin 9 of 2023—Assessor Certification Level Requirements](#) contains information regarding the assessor certification level requirements for 2025.

Help improve the Michigan Green Communities program

Your input can help improve the Michigan Green Communities (MGC) program, in which MTA is a partner, by completing a [program evaluation survey](#). The survey is open to any Michigan municipality, even those who have never participated in the MGC Challenge. MGC is a statewide network of local government staff and officials who collaborate with one another to promote innovative sustainability solutions at the local, regional and state level. The annual MGC Challenge is a key part of the program, allowing participants to track and benchmark their sustainability progress.

Free regional meetings share recycling updates and information

The Michigan Recycling Coalition (MRC) is hosting [in-person meetings](#) at eight locations across the state to connect regional stakeholders and provide up-to-date recycling program information. State Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and MRC staff share Information on materials management planning, new Part 115 regulations on facilities, and

other nuts and bolts recycling-related topics to help attendees network and accomplish recycling goals. RSVP via the [MRC website](#).

Member input sought for 2024 MTA legislative policy platform

MTA is seeking review and input from members on its legislative policy platform. Reviewed and updated annually, the legislative policy objectives guide MTA's government relations efforts and reflect emerging issues and goals. MTA members are encouraged to review the current [MTA 2023-24 Policy Platform](#) and share any proposed revisions and suggested additions by Monday, **Nov. 27**. Member-proposed policy changes will be reviewed by MTA committees for word selection and legality, and to ensure they conform with the Association's overall goals and objectives. The proposed policies will be presented at the 2024 MTA Annual Meeting in conjunction with our Annual Educational Conference in April. Contact the MTA Government Relations Department at legislation@michigantownships.org with questions, comments or suggestions.

MTA has new tools for county chapters

MTA has made it easier for county chapters to keep the Association updated on its officers and meeting schedules, and to invite an MTA staff member to speak at a chapter meeting. On our ["County Chapters" webpage](#) (log-in is required), you can find a [directory of county chapters](#), their officers and meeting details. Use a [new online form](#) to submit updated information. A new [speaker request form](#) allows county chapters to invite a member of the MTA staff to an upcoming meeting, including selecting a presentation topic.

Invasive species grants available

Michigan's [Invasive Species Grant Program](#) is now accepting proposals to combat invasive species. Full proposals are due **Nov. 1**, with award announcements expected next March. Grant requests for general projects can range from \$25,000 to \$400,000. Competitive applications will outline clear objectives, propose significant ecological benefits, demonstrate diverse collaboration, and show strong community support. All applications must be submitted through the MiGrants online system. Applicants can access the system and learn more at Michigan.gov/MISGP. Applicants also can take advantage of a [webinar](#) on Wednesday, Sept. 6 at 9 a.m. to learn more about general grant information, the application process and priorities. A recorded version of the webinar will be available on the above webpage after Sept. 6.

Asset management principles, best practices at 2023 TAMC conference

The Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council's (TAMC) [2023 Conference](#), **Sept. 26** in Grand Rapids, will share asset management principles and best practices to

inform investment decisions among Michigan's transportation agencies. TAMC is comprised of professionals from county road commissions, local governments, regional and metropolitan planning organizations, and state transportation department personnel.

Read the September issue of *Township Focus*—in mailboxes and online now!

Check out your [September issue of *Township Focus*](#) now! This month's cover story, *Outdoor recreation fosters township quality of life, economic development*, shares how townships can take on recreation projects in an effort to improve their communities. In our feature story, a township fire chief discusses how townships can adapt to 2022 firefighter training requirement changes with cooperation and collaboration. In our Q&A columns, "Hello, MTA ... ?" discusses retention schedules for files, emails and text messages while "Financial Forum" dives into accounting for property tax collections. Check it out today!