

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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HOUSE ADVANCES \$50.25 BILLION BUDGET; IMPASSE CONTINUES

As the fall legislative session moves forward, both the House and Senate returned to Harrisburg last week to continue work on the long-delayed state budget. While several key bills advanced in both chambers, the House also took action on the Senate's previously passed budget plan.

The House Appropriations Committee amended [Senate Bill 160](#), the Senate's flat-funded budget proposal approved in August, to reflect a \$50.25 billion spending plan. The measure advanced along party lines before being approved by the full House in a 105–98 vote. The bill now returns to the Senate for concurrence.

Meanwhile, the Senate advanced [Senate Bill 1040](#), sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore Kim Ward (R–Westmoreland). The legislation would permit the State Treasury Department to waive interest on investment loans issued during a budget impasse, following Treasury's announcement of \$500 million in loans to support Head Start providers and county governments. The bill now moves to the House for further consideration.

Despite progress on these measures, the overall budget impasse remains unresolved. With months having passed without a finalized state budget, counties are increasingly strained by the absence of funding and uncertainty about the months ahead. Counties continue to

emphasize the urgent need for a completed budget to ensure essential local services remain stable and accessible to residents across Pennsylvania.

The Senate is scheduled to return the week of October 20, with both chambers back in session the week of October 27.

911 SYSTEM FACES CRITICAL FUNDING DEADLINE

With limited session days remaining, the expiration of [Pennsylvania's 911 surcharge](#) is quickly approaching. The surcharge, the sole dedicated funding source for county 911 systems, is set to expire on January 31, 2026. **Counties urge the General Assembly to reauthorize the surcharge swiftly and increase it from \$1.95 to \$2.20 to ensure stable, sufficient funding for this essential public safety service.** The surcharge supports every aspect of 911 operations, including staffing, equipment, and future system upgrades such as Next Generation 911 (NG911) and cybersecurity enhancements.

Since its creation in 1990, the surcharge has been increased only twice, first in 2015 to begin the NG911 transition and again in 2023. Even with the most recent adjustment, the surcharge generated \$375 million in 2024, \$80 million short of the estimated \$455 million needed to fully fund the system. As a result, county property taxpayers continue to contribute nearly \$100 million annually, covering about 20 percent of total costs.

Reauthorizing and increasing the surcharge through 2029 is the only path forward. Doing so will relieve pressure on local taxpayers, provide sustainable funding for NG911, and ensure that every Pennsylvanian, and every visitor, can rely on this critical public safety service when it matters most.

On October 7, 2025, Senator Katie Muth (D–Montgomery) introduced [Senate Bill 1037](#), a measure to secure the future of Pennsylvania's 911 system. The legislation would reauthorize the 911 surcharge, increase it to \$2.20 per month beginning February 1, 2026, and index future adjustments to inflation (CPI-U) to ensure funding remains stable and keeps pace with rising operational costs.

This proposal delivers a long-term funding solution that supports 911 operations, technology, and staffing while easing the growing financial burden on county property taxpayers. Counties support Senate Bill 1037 as it advances their highest priority – preserving and strengthening one of the most vital public safety services in the commonwealth.

Counties stand ready to work with the administration and the General Assembly to enact this vital legislation before the January 31, 2026, deadline, ensuring a safe, reliable, and modern 911 system for all.

KEY BILLS ADVANCING IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Last week during legislative session, several measures related to county government advanced in the General Assembly.

House Bill 587, introduced by Rep. Paul Friel (D–Chester), passed the House and now moves to the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee for further consideration. The bill would add a new chapter to Pennsylvania’s agriculture laws to regulate commercial haulers and brokers of animal and food processing residuals (FPRs), materials remaining from the processing of animal or food products. Under the legislation, any commercial hauler or broker that stores, transports, transfers, or land-applies these residuals would be required to obtain certification through a Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture program. Certified haulers and brokers would be required to comply with this act and the state’s Solid Waste Management Act. As the use of FPR’s has expanded in recent years, counties are seeking clear regulations and best practices to ensure environmental protection while preserving farmers’ ability to responsibly use FPRs as part of their regular agricultural operations.

House Bill 1528, sponsored by Rep. Maureen Madden (D–Monroe), would establish the Grand-family Assistance Program under the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. This program would provide one-time grants to area agencies on aging to support grandparents who are the primary caregivers of their grandchildren while the children’s parents are in opioid use disorder treatment programs. Funding could come from state appropriations or the Opioid Settlement Restricted Account, provided it aligns with allowable opioid remediation uses. The bill passed the House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee and now awaits consideration on the House floor.

Senate Bill 955, introduced by Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill (R–York), would create a new Mental Health Awareness specialty license plate in Pennsylvania. The plate would cost an additional \$42 beyond the standard registration fee, with \$15 of that amount directed to a new Mental Health Restricted Account within the State Treasury. Funds in this account would support the operation of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or a similar future service and would be continuously appropriated to the Department of Human Services. The bill passed the Senate and now moves to the House Transportation Committee. As mental health and crisis funding continue to be among counties’ top **legislative priorities**, counties support this measure as an innovative approach to strengthening the funding of mental health and crisis services.

CCAP will continue to monitor these legislative developments and engage with the General Assembly as these bills progress.

WHEELER TESTIFIES ON YORK COUNTY'S WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

On October 9, the House Republican Policy Committee held a public hearing spotlighting York County’s innovative water quality monitoring initiative. Wade Gobrecht, Director of the York County Planning Commission, detailed the county’s partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to establish a real-time water quality monitoring system launching in 2025. Gobrecht highlighted the system’s capacity to analyze data by watershed, enabling more targeted mitigation strategies and offering critical insights into pollutant transport, the

effectiveness of management practices, and long-term water quality improvement. The 10-year project aims to leverage data-driven strategies to enhance local water quality and demonstrate the potential for broader statewide application of this technology.

York County President Commissioner Julie Wheeler [discussed](#) how York County's model could serve as a template for other counties across the Commonwealth, noting that the project has already been featured in CCAP and National Association of Counties (NACo) publications. She underscored the importance of sharing York County's experience to help other counties overcome similar challenges and expressed interest in collaborating with neighboring regions within the Susquehanna and Chesapeake Bay watersheds.

The hearing showcased York County's leadership in environmental innovation and its forward-thinking partnership with the USGS to advance data-informed water quality management.



ROAD TO HOUSING ACT CLEARS THE U.S. SENATE

On October 9, the [Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream \(ROAD\) to Housing Act](#) advanced out of the U.S. Senate and now heads to the U.S. House for consideration. The measure cleared the Senate as a floor amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026.

The ROAD to Housing Act seeks to strengthen local housing strategies by providing new federal funding streams, technical assistance, and data modernization support, key tools for counties working to address housing challenges within their communities. The bill reauthorizes several existing housing programs while adding greater flexibility and introducing new federal investments.

A notable provision within the legislation is the Whole-Home Repairs Act, which would establish a five-year pilot program under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This program would provide grants and forgivable loans to low- and

moderate-income homeowners and eligible small landlords to address critical home repairs and safety concerns.

This initiative builds on Pennsylvania's Whole-Home Repairs Program, which counties have strongly supported. The state-level program has been reintroduced as the PA Home Preservation Program under [House Bill 1650](#), introduced by Rep. Lindsay Powell (D-Allegheny). Designed to help local governments preserve and improve existing housing stock, HB 1650 authorizes grants to counties, or partnerships of local governments, with experience in housing rehabilitation or restoration. Funding may also be subgranted to eligible partner organizations to address habitability issues, enhance energy or water efficiency, and make homes more accessible for individuals with disabilities. The bill passed the House in late June and now awaits consideration by the Senate Urban Affairs and Housing Committee.

For a more in-depth analysis of the ROAD to Housing Act, please refer to the National Association of Counties (NACo) [website](#).

DUAL BUDGET STALEMATE DEEPENS IMPACT ON PENNSYLVANIA

The federal government shutdown has entered its 17th day as of Friday, October 17, with Congress still unable to reach agreement on a budget resolution. On Thursday, October 16, the U.S. Senate voted against the proposed funding bill, with the primary point of contention remaining the extension of health insurance subsidies.

As Pennsylvania's own state budget also remains unresolved, the Commonwealth faces compounded challenges from both the state and federal budget impasses, leaving Pennsylvania among the most heavily impacted states in the nation.

Counties are urging both their state and federal partners to reach a resolution swiftly to ensure that vital programs and services benefiting Pennsylvania's communities can continue without interruption.

CCAP FALL CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The 2025 [CCAP Fall Conference](#) will take place November 23–25 at The Hotel Hershey in Dauphin County. In preparation, CCAP's policy committees have met to develop their 2026 work plans and identify the key issues to be advanced as part of the Association's 2026 county legislative priorities.

During the business meeting at the conference, CCAP members will vote, both in person and virtually, on the 2026 county legislative priorities, as well as consider the Association's 2026 action plan and other organizational matters. Detailed information on the voting items will be shared with members in advance of the conference.



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