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# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA  
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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## COUNTY LEADERS CALL FOR 911 SURCHARGE INCREASE

On Monday, May 4, County leaders from across Pennsylvania convened at York County's 911 Center to call for long-term sustainability of the state's 911 system through an increase in the 911 surcharge. The 911 surcharge is a monthly fee attached to each phone line/device (cell, landline, VoIP) that is used to fund the 911 system in Pennsylvania. The request from county leaders is to **raise the 911 surcharge from \$1.95 to \$2.20**.

York County President Commissioner and CCAP Treasurer Julie Wheeler spoke to the need for proper funding of 911 centers. She shared how York 911 Telecommunicators were heroes during 2 tragic incidents in 2025. 911 Telecommunicators are the link for first responders. "The state mandates counties provide these services, and it is past time for the state to do its part to ensure these critical public safety systems are adequately funded – not just for today, but for our future generations," said Wheeler.

CCAP President and Snyder County Commissioner Joe Kantz spoke to how counties are having to merge their 911 centers to ensure stability and reliability across the Commonwealth. In Snyder County they created the Central Susquehanna 911 Center to

bridge the gaps of surrounding counties' 911 centers. "We've embraced consolidation. We've pursued regionalization. We've invested in shared services and modern technology—all to reduce duplication and improve service delivery," said Kantz.

Sullivan County Commissioner Brian Hoffman, who is also the co-chair of CCAP's Emergency Management and Veterans Affairs Committee, spoke from the perspective of one of Pennsylvania's smaller, more rural counties. "Without an increase in the surcharge, counties will be forced into difficult decisions that could affect service levels, staffing, and long-term system investments," Hoffman said.

Counties continue to advocate for an increase in the 911 surcharge as costs continue to rise for 911 technology. For more information on our 911 surcharge priority, please visit our [priorities](#) page on our website. Click [here](#) for our full press release.

## COUNTY OFFICIALS BRIEF LEGISLATORS ON MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING AND WALK-IN CRISIS CENTERS

CCAP partnered with the Connections Health Solutions Crisis Walk-In Center at the State Capitol on Wednesday, May 6 to lead a discussion on the need for sustained and enhanced county mental health funding, and its impact on public safety, corrections, and essential government services.

A panel of nine subject-matter experts, including county commissioners, law enforcement leaders, county administrators, mental health professionals, and representatives from Connections Health Solutions, highlighted how the Center has improved outcomes across public safety, correctional facilities and behavioral health services.

Panelists emphasized that the walk-in center provides immediate, person-centered crisis care and has helped divert individuals experiencing behavioral health emergencies away from jails and hospital emergency rooms, allowing them to receive appropriate treatment more quickly. Local officials noted that law enforcement and county jails are not equipped to handle mental health emergencies, making community-based crisis centers essential.

The Center has shown itself to be a great support for local law enforcement, county jails, and mental health administrators. However, Chris Santarsiero, from Connections said "Additional state funds will ensure these new and impactful services will benefit the broader community by serving individuals in crisis regardless of need, insurance coverage or time of day and solve the 'divert to what' problem getting individuals the treatment they need quickly." CCAP is urging the General Assembly to **provide targeted resources, including funding and other necessary supports**, to help counties and mental health crisis centers serve uninsured individuals and address the growing challenges of insurance loss and affordability.

As the state budget process resumes in June, counties and partner organizations are urging lawmakers to prioritize targeted investments in crisis services, especially walk-in centers, to strengthen community-based behavioral health care and enhance public safety.

For more information on our mental health priority, please visit our [priorities](#) page on our website. Click [here](#) for our full press release.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY RETURNS TO SESSION AHEAD OF JUNE BUDGET SEASON

The General Assembly returned to Harrisburg during the first week of May, where lawmakers considered several bills relevant to counties.

On May 5, the House passed [House Bill 1485](#), introduced by Rep. Joe Ciresi (D-Montgomery). The bill would amend Pennsylvania's Emergency and Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act to expand eligibility for death benefits to include coroners, deputy coroners, medical examiners, and certain staff involved in death investigations, as well as public works employees. Under the proposal, if a covered individual dies while performing official duties, their surviving spouse or eligible children could receive a death benefit adjusted for inflation. Eligible survivors could also receive ongoing monthly payments equal to the deceased employee's monthly salary and related compensation components. House Bill 1485 now heads to the full Senate for consideration.

[House Bill 2468](#), introduced by Rep. Tarik Khan (D-Philadelphia), would amend Pennsylvania's Fiscal Code to provide additional funding for the Agriculture Innovation Grant Program. Specifically, the bill would require that at least \$19 million be made available to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, to the extent funding is appropriated by the General Assembly. The Agriculture Innovation Grant Program supports projects and initiatives intended to promote innovation and development within Pennsylvania's agriculture industry. The House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee passed this bill on May 5th where it now awaits further consideration by the full House.

The General Assembly will resume session during the first week of June and remain in session through the end of the month as lawmakers work to finalize the state budget. Counties will continue monitoring the budget process as negotiations and discussions progress throughout the month.

## SENATE COMMITTEE PASSES HOTEL TAX TRANSPARENCY BILL

[Senate Bill 1105](#), introduced by Sen. Rosemary Brown (R-Monroe), would amend Pennsylvania's county hotel room rental tax law for third through eighth class counties by updating definitions, clarifying tax collection responsibilities, and establishing additional reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

The bill would require booking agents, such as online travel platforms that collect payment on behalf of hotels or short-term rentals, to collect and remit county hotel room rental taxes when processing rent payments. It would also authorize counties to adopt ordinances requiring operators and booking agents to maintain records, file tax returns, and disclose certain information related to hotel transactions.

The legislation further permits counties to require transaction information for tax verification purposes, including the location of hotels where rents were collected, taxes remitted, and other occupancy-related details. Failure to comply with the reporting requirements could result in penalties.

Counties support efforts to improve transparency and accountability in the collection of hotel room rental taxes. This bill could help ensure taxes are collected and remitted consistently across booking platforms and lodging operators while providing counties with clearer information for verification and enforcement purposes.

Senate Bill 1105 passed the Senate Community, Economic and Recreational Committee on May 6th and now awaits further consideration by the full Senate.

## HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE ADVANCES P3 TRANSPORTATION BILL

On May 4, the House Transportation Committee passed [House Bill 2469](#), introduced by Rep. Lindsay Powell (D-Allegheny). The bill amends Title 74 (Transportation) to expand the definition of "public entity" to explicitly include counties, thereby making them eligible to utilize public-private partnerships (P3s) for transportation projects. Under current law, only PennDOT and certain entities that own transportation facilities are authorized to enter into P3 agreements.

Public-private partnerships provide a framework for government entities to collaborate with private partners to finance, develop, operate, or maintain transportation infrastructure. By extending this authority to counties, the bill broadens the tools available to advance local transportation projects.

In addition, the legislation extends existing statutory immunity protections to counties, as well as to the cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Counties support preserving and expanding the ability to pursue public-private partnerships as a flexible option for delivering infrastructure projects, including transportation and broadband initiatives.

House Bill 2469 now advances to the full House for further consideration.

## SENATE COMMITTEE CLEARS HOUSING PACKAGE

On May 6, the Senate Urban Affairs and Housing Committee advanced several housing-related bills for consideration by the full Senate.

**[Senate Bill 1277](#)**, introduced by Patrick Stefano, would amend Pennsylvania's Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Act. LERTA allows local governments to provide temporary property tax abatements for redevelopment projects in designated deteriorated areas. The bill would extend the maximum local tax abatement period from 10 years to 20 years for municipalities participating in an existing LERTA program. In addition, the Department of Community and Economic Development would be required to establish and maintain a publicly accessible online registry of local governments with active LERTA ordinances or resolutions.

**[Senate Bill 1279](#)**, introduced by Kristin Phillips-Hill and titled the "Reduce the Red Tape for Housing Act," would create a State Housing Regulatory Compliance Officer within the executive branch. The position would be responsible for working with local governments to develop standardized housing permitting processes and improve coordination related to residential development approvals.

**[Senate Bill 1281](#)**, introduced by Greg Rothman, would direct the State Planning Board to establish rules for an expedited approval process for certain high-density residential housing developments. Under the proposal, municipalities would be required to approve qualifying housing developments even if the projects conflict with local comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, or other land use regulations, provided the developments meet standards established by the state. Eligible projects could include attached or detached housing, accessory dwelling units, modular or prefabricated housing, and mixed-use developments containing residential components. If enacted, the bill would shift approval authority for certain qualifying residential developments from local governments to the state and create a standardized approval process for those projects.

All three bills now move to the full Senate for further consideration.

## U.S. HOUSE ADVANCES FARM BILL

On April 30, the U.S. House of Representatives passed its version of the 2026 Farm Bill, *the Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2026* (**[H.R. 7567](#)**) introduced by G. T. Thompson (R-Pa.), Chair of the House Agriculture Committee.

The legislation includes several provisions with potential implications for county governments, particularly in rural communities. Key components of the bill include expanded opportunities for rural energy development, increased access to broadband infrastructure, enhanced support for rural health care access, and efforts to strengthen local and regional food distribution systems, among other initiatives.

The most recent Farm Bill, the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, originally expired in 2023. However, due to stalled negotiations in Congress, the legislation has been extended multiple times and is currently funded through September 30, 2026, at existing funding levels.

The House-passed Farm Bill now moves to the Senate for further consideration. For additional information and a more detailed breakdown of the legislation, please refer to the [analysis](#) prepared by the National Association of Counties (NACo).

## IFO RELEASES APRIL REVENUE UPDATE

The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released the monthly revenue update for [April 2026](#), showing that General Fund collections totaled \$6.72 billion, which was \$466 million (7.5%) above the IFO's official estimate. The modest increase was driven by stronger-than-expected personal income tax, sales and use tax, and gross receipts tax collections.

Fiscal-year-to-date General Fund revenues through the end of April total \$41.66 billion, exceeding the IFO's official estimate by \$831 million (2.0%). Compared to the same point last fiscal year, year-to-date collections are \$2.23 billion (5.6%) higher.

Anecdotal data suggest that much of the overage was driven by taxable capital gains realizations as the stock market significantly outperformed projections made in June 2025.



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