

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

IN THIS EDITION

- Senate Committee Advances 911 Surcharge Reauthorization and Public Safety Authorities Legislation
- Senate Amends Budget Bill as Impasse Continues
- Permitting Reforms and AI RTK Legislation Advance
- Critical Services Impacted by Ongoing Budget Deadlock
- Support Veterans with Operation Green Light
- CCAP Fall Conference Activities

SENATE COMMITTEE ADVANCES 911 SURCHARGE REAUTHORIZATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY AUTHORITIES LEGISLATION

On October 27, the Senate Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee considered two critical pieces of legislation and advanced them to the Senate floor for consideration: Senate Bill 1078 and Senate Bill 737.

[Senate Bill 1078](#), introduced by Senator Doug Mastriano (R-Adams), would reauthorize Pennsylvania's 911 surcharge at its current rate of \$1.95 per device or subscription through February 1, 2029. Counties appreciate the General Assembly's commitment to supporting 911 services and beginning the work to reauthorize the surcharge. Taking action before the January 31, 2026 sunset date is a critical first step to ensure uninterrupted 911 operations and continued support for the highly trained and dedicated professionals who respond to more than 14 million calls annually, providing calm, lifesaving guidance in moments of crisis.

However, additional action is needed to ensure counties have the resources to meet rising costs and keep pace with advancing technology. While the increase provided in Act 34 of 2023 provided critically needed new revenue, surcharge revenues continue to fall behind the growing cost of delivering NG911 services, despite county efforts to streamline operations

and improve efficiency. To that end, **counties are requesting an increase in the surcharge to \$2.20** to:

- Sustain county 911 operations amid rising personnel and equipment costs;
- Support the transition to Next Generation 911 (NG911), including capabilities for text, image, and video emergency communications;
- Provide ongoing training, retention, and professional development for public safety telecommunicators - the first link in every emergency; and
- Ensure predictable, stable funding to prevent service degradation and delays in technology upgrades.

Reauthorizing the 911 surcharge and securing the requested increase is CCAP's [top legislative priority](#) for 2025. Counties stand ready to work with the General Assembly to advance this priority, secure the future of Pennsylvania's 911 system, and fulfill our shared responsibility to protect the citizens of the commonwealth.

[Senate Bill 737](#), introduced by Senator Lisa Baker (R-Luzerne), would enable counties to establish countywide or multi-municipal Public Safety Authorities focused specifically on emergency medical services (EMS). This legislation provides counties with the option to create a public safety authority independently or in collaboration with neighboring counties.

Counties recognize the importance of preserving the autonomy of EMS agencies while fostering collaboration with municipal officials and service providers to develop locally tailored solutions. Across Pennsylvania, counties, municipalities, and local providers are already partnering to identify innovative strategies to address the ongoing EMS crisis

This legislation does not shift responsibility for EMS to counties; rather, it provides tools, resources, and a collaborative platform to support locally driven solutions. In line with the findings and recommendations of the [CCAP EMS Task Force](#), CCAP supports this local option as a practical measure to help address the ongoing EMS crisis.

Counties remain committed to working with the General Assembly to advance these emergency preparedness legislative priorities and strengthen public safety across Pennsylvania.

SENATE AMENDS BUDGET BILL AS STALEMATE CONTINUES

On October 21, the Senate revisited [Senate Bill 160](#), which the House had recently amended and approved as a \$50.25 billion budget plan ([PN 1225](#)). In the Senate Rules and Nominations Committee, members voted to revert the bill back to its original version and amend it to increase last year's \$47.6 billion spending level to \$47.9 billion ([PN 1258](#)). SB 160, as re-amended, included \$300 million in appropriations for debt service and school employee pensions and also included an across the board 5% decrease in appropriations for the General Assembly. The bill now returns to the House for further consideration.

Both chambers were in session this week, though no additional progress was made on the budget. As the impasse enters its fifth month with no resolution in sight, county leaders continue to warn of mounting financial strain and workforce disruptions that will grow more

severe the longer the stalemate continues.

To help mitigate these impacts, counties are urging support for measures such as [**Senate Bill 1040**](#), introduced by Senate President Pro Tempore Kim Ward (R-Westmoreland). This legislation would authorize the Treasury Department to waive interest on investment loans issued during the impasse, which are currently accruing at a rate of 4.5%. Without relief, limited county resources will be diverted to interest payments instead of sustaining state-mandated services. Access to interest-free borrowing is essential to ensure continuity of operations and prevent thousands of dollars in avoidable costs. Representative Jim Struzzi (R-Indiana) also issued a [**co-sponsor memorandum**](#) signaling his intent to introduce identical legislation in the House.

Counties further support proposals to authorize reimbursement for interest and expenses incurred due to borrowing during the impasse, as outlined in a [**co-sponsor memorandum**](#) issued by Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta (D-Philadelphia). Throughout the commonwealth, many counties have already begun the formal process of securing loans to remain operational, making these measures timely and necessary. Additionally, counties strongly supported a resolution at the annual business meeting this summer calling for the commonwealth to reimburse costs incurred due to borrowing during this or any future budget impasse.

Counties stand ready to work with the General Assembly to enact a state budget and ensure continuity of critical services across Pennsylvania.

PERMITTING REFORMS AND AI RTK LEGISLATION ADVANCE

Legislation on permitting reform and updates to the Right-to-Know Law, addressing cybersecurity concerns and the growing use of artificial intelligence in public records request, advanced in the Senate this week.

[**Senate Bill 6**](#), introduced by Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York), builds on the Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) program enacted under Act 54 of 2024. This bill extends the accelerated permit review process to other state agencies and requires them to post information on the permits and licenses they issue, provide an online system for applicants to track submissions, and cite the legal authority for permit denials. It also creates the Office of Transformation and Opportunity to coordinate multi-agency economic development efforts. SB 6 passed the Senate on October 22 and now awaits consideration in the House Intergovernmental Affairs and Operations Committee.

[**Senate Bill 431**](#), introduced by Senator Tracy Pennycuik (R-Berks), updates Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) to address cybersecurity concerns and the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in public records requests. The bill adds definitions for AI and generative AI and allows agencies to deny electronic requests if opening links or attachments poses a cybersecurity risk, or if the request appears to be automatically generated by an AI system. By permitting counties to deny requests when there is a reasonable concern, SB 431 helps protect sensitive county data and prevents exposure to malware, phishing attempts, or other cyber exploits. At the same time, the bill maintains transparency by preserving the public's

right to appeal any denial, thereby allowing counties to uphold both security and accountability under the RTKL. SB 431 passed the Senate Communications and Technology Committee and awaits further consideration on the Senate floor.

As these bills progress through the legislature, CCAP will monitor their status and provide timely updates on any developments.

CRITICAL SERVICES IMPACTED BY ONGOING BUDGET DEADLOCK

At the time of this publication, the federal government remains shut down, now entering its fifth week with little indication of an imminent agreement. On Tuesday, October 28, the U.S. Senate failed to advance a budget resolution that would have reopened the government and funded operations through November 21. The measure fell 54–45, short of the 60 votes needed to proceed, with the primary point of contention centered on the extension of health insurance subsidies.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is projected to run out of funding on November 1, as program dollars remain tied to stalled budget negotiations. Pennsylvania Treasurer Stacy Garrity [announced](#) that the Department proposed funding November's SNAP benefits through a Short-Term Investment Pool loan. On October 28, the commonwealth took [legal action](#) requesting that the U.S. Department of Agriculture utilize available contingency funds, appropriated by Congress, to cover November SNAP benefits amid the ongoing federal government shutdown. Pennsylvania has joined a coalition of 25 states and the District of Columbia in this lawsuit.

Compounding these challenges, Pennsylvania's own state budget remains unresolved. The simultaneous federal and state impasses place significant strain on critical services, leaving Pennsylvania among the most heavily affected states in the nation. Counties are urging both state and federal leaders to swiftly reach agreement and ensure the continuity of vital programs and services that support communities across the Commonwealth.

SUPPORT VETERANS WITH OPERATION GREEN LIGHT

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) have pulled together resources for counties to support veterans and raise awareness about important county resources available to help veterans transition to civilian life. From November 4–11, Operation Green Light invites counties to light their buildings green as a visible show of appreciation and support for our veterans. More information about Operation Green Light, sample resolutions and other resources to honor the initiative can be found on [NACo's website](#).

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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