

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA  
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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## **MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**

As May marks Mental Health Awareness Month, counties across Pennsylvania are sounding the alarm: awareness alone is not enough. It's time to take urgent, meaningful action to rebuild and properly fund Pennsylvania's community-based mental health system.

For nearly two decades, funding for county mental health services has failed to keep pace with inflation and growing demand. As a result, critical services—like outpatient care for adults and children, crisis intervention, school-based programs, reentry support, day programs, and prevention—are stretched thin or at risk.

This year, counties are calling on the legislature to invest \$100 million in additional funding to begin the long-overdue process of rebuilding Pennsylvania's mental health infrastructure.

Pennsylvania residents cannot wait any longer. Counties are urging the state to designate May not just as Mental Health Awareness Month—but as **Mental Health Action Month**. A robust state-county partnership is essential to stabilize and strengthen the behavioral health system, improve outcomes, and ensure long-term success for individuals and communities across the commonwealth.

More information on this top county priority can be found on the Priorities [webpage](#) of the CCAP website.

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## **HOUSE MOVES LEGISLATION IMPACTING COUNTIES**

The House was in session last week and moved various bills that could have impacts on

county government. Given the potential impacts for counties, CCAP will continue to monitor future developments on these proposals.

### **House Bill 273 – County Property Maintenance Code Enforcement**

**House Bill 273**, introduced by Rep. Robert Merski (D-Erie), passed out of the House on April 23 with a vote of 110-93. This bill amends Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes by adding Section 6104 (County Property Maintenance Code). Under this legislation, a county would be permitted to enact a property maintenance code program. The legislation also creates the Municipal Codes Enforcement Grant Program to provide grants of up to \$100,000 to municipalities, including counties, to assist them in developing code enforcement programs to reduce blighted property conditions. Municipalities that receive this grant would need to contribute matching funds equal to the amount of the grant.

In addition, the legislation would allow counties with a code enforcement program to impose penalties that would be deposited into a municipal neighborhood mitigation fund established through an ordinance for the purpose of reducing code violations. The penalties would be imposed as follows:

- Between \$25 and \$250 for the first violation
- Between \$250 and \$500 for the second violation
- Between \$500 and \$1,000 for the third or subsequent violation.

### **House Bill 586 – Food Processing Residuals**

**House Bill 586** amends Act 97 of 1980 (Solid Waste Management Act) to establish guidelines for the regulation of Food Processing Residuals (FPRs). The bill would require the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and State Conservation Commission, to develop, update, and maintain a manual for establishing best practices for the processing, characterization, use, storage, and application of FPRs, including a tiered system for FPRs based on content and best practices for managing the impact of potential orders.

The legislation would permit the use of FPRs in the course of normal farming operations through a land application system – this would require various pieces of information, including, but not limited to, a description of the construction, location, storage, capacity, and operation of facilities intended to be used for storage of FPRs and a description of setbacks that have been established for the protection of natural resources.

### **House Bill 743 – Designating Blighted or Abandoned Property for Land Bank Acquisition**

**House Bill 743** passed the House on April 23. This legislation, introduced by Rep. Abigail Salisbury (D-Allegheny) would provide municipalities, including counties, with greater authority to designate blighted or abandoned property as available for land banks to acquire for redevelopment. The legislation stipulates that all of the following would need to be satisfied in order for a municipality to designate the property as available for land banks:

- The property is abandoned or vacant and blighted for five years or is abandoned or vacant and has been declared a nuisance property by the county for five years
- The property has a record of building code violations or has been in serious violation of municipal ordinances, including tax delinquency
- The municipality has attempted at least three notifications by mail to the owner of the property to remediate the building code or ordinance violations.

The bill would require a municipality to provide notice to the owner of the property that meets the aforementioned criteria and allow 90 days once the notice is sent for the owner to request an appeal hearing to contest the designation.

### **House Bill 749 – SNAP Payment Distribution Reporting**

**House Bill 749**, introduced by Rep. Dave Madsen (D-Dauphin), amends Act 21 of 1967 (Human Services Code) to require the Department of Human Services to analyze every five years the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) payment distribution schedules based on caseloads and census data. These reports would be used to determine whether changes are needed to the SNAP payment distribution schedule. This legislation

passed out of the House on April 22 and awaits further consideration by the Senate.

### **House Bill 853 – Fees for Delinquent Per Capita, Poll, and Occupancy Tax Notices**

**House Bill 853**, introduced by Rep. Joe Webster (D-Montgomery) was reported out of the House Finance Committee and received first consideration on April 24. This legislation amends Act 394 of 1945 (Local Tax Collection Law) to allow a county tax collector, taxing district, or a private equity entity designated by a taxing district to impose and collect a reasonable fee for the costs incurred to provide a notice of delinquency for per capita, poll, and occupation taxes or to implement similar procedures for the purpose of collecting taxes from a delinquent taxpayer as approved by the taxing district. The taxing district would only be able to impose these fees during the five-year period commencing after the last day of the calendar year when the per capita, poll, or occupation taxes were due. This legislation currently awaits further consideration by the House.

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## **NACo TO HOST TWO-PART MEDICAID WEBINAR SERIES**

The National Association of Counties (NACo) announced that they will be hosting a two-part webinar series – Federal Reforms to Medicaid Financing: What Counties Should Know. This series will examine the essential role that Medicaid plays in supporting county-based behavioral health and primary care services. The webinars will also evaluate how recent federal financing reforms that propose to cut funding to Medicaid could impact counties as budget negotiations continue in Congress.

- [Register here](#) for Part 1 of this series taking place on Tuesday, May 6, from 3:00-4:00 PM.
  - [Register here](#) for Part 2 of this series taking place on Monday, May 12, from 3:00-4:00 PM.
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## **EV & PHEV FEES BEGAN APRIL 1, 2025**

On April 1, 2025, Pennsylvania implemented a new annual **road user charge** for electric vehicles (EVs) and Plug in Hybrid vehicles (PHEVs), replacing the previous Alternative Fuels Tax. Under this new system, EV owners will pay a \$200 fee and PHEV owners a \$50 fee in the first year. In 2026, these fees will increase to \$250 for EVs and \$63 for PHEVs. Starting January 1, 2027, the EV fee will be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index, with the PHEV fee set at 25% of the EV fee, rounded to the nearest dollar. These fees are paid separately from the standard vehicle registration fee and are required for registration renewal.

The enactment of **Act 85**, signed into law by Governor Shapiro in 2024, established an annual road user charge designed to mirror the fuel taxes paid by drivers of gasoline-powered vehicles. This change ensures that EV and PHEV owners contribute more equitably to the funding of road and bridge maintenance. Previously, the EV and PHEV owners were subject to the Alternative Fuels Tax. However, because EV's do not use gasoline and PHEVs use very little, their contributions to the fuel tax- and consequently to road and bridge maintenance- were disproportionately low.

By replacing the outdated tax structure with a more consistent and equitable fee structure, Pennsylvania ensures that all drivers contribute their fair share toward maintaining critical transportation infrastructure. State officials estimate that by 2030, with more than 87,000 EVs and nearly 53,000 PHEVs on the road, the new fees will generate approximately \$29 million annually.

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## **BILLS INTRODUCED FOR GOVERNOR'S LIGHTNING PLAN**

On March 11, Governor Shapiro unveiled key components of his "Lightning Plan" – a comprehensive energy plan to secure the commonwealth's energy future. The aim of the

Lightning Plan is to address concerns related to the increase in demand for energy, as well as the increased cost of energy to Pennsylvanians. According to the Governor's **announcement**, the plan will result in new job creation, lowered energy costs for consumers, faster permitting, and more energy generation in Pennsylvania – ensuring the commonwealth will continue to be a national energy leader in the future. Key components in the Lightning Plan include:

Following the Governor's announcement, members of the House of Representatives have introduced a package of legislation to implement various provisions of the Lightning Plan.

- **House Bill 500** – Introduced by Rep. John Inglis III (D-Allegheny), this bill makes updates to the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) Tax Credit Program by establishing new and revising existing tax credits to incentivize energy projects.
- **House Bill 501** – Introduced by Rep. Danielle Friel Otten (D-Chester), this bill establishes the Pennsylvania Reliable Energy Sustainability Standard (PRESS), which aims to build off of the current Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS) created two decades ago. This legislation will expand the scope of PRESS to include other forms of energy, including nuclear power.
- **House Bill 502** – Introduced by Rep. Mandy Steele (D-Allegheny), this legislation establishes the Reliable Energy Siting and Electric Transition Board to facilitate the development of new sources of reliable energy in the Commonwealth while limiting adverse effects on health, safety, and environment.
- **House Bill 503** – Introduced by Rep. Aerion Abney (D-Allegheny), this legislation establishes the Pennsylvania Climate Emissions Reduction (PACER) Program within the Department of Environmental Protection to implement the Pennsylvania-run CO2 Budget Trading Program.
- **House Bill 504** – Introduced by Rep. Peter Schweyer (D-Lehigh), this legislation establishes the framework for Community Energy and allows for the creation, financing, accessibility, and operation of community renewable energy generating facilities.
- **House Bill 505** – Introduced by Rep. Kyle Donahue (D-Lackawanna), this legislation makes updates to Act 129 of 2008 to modernize the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Program, which requires large electric utility companies to develop Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plans to reduce energy consumption. This often includes incentives for consumers, like rebates, to practice energy efficiency.

Members of the Senate have also circulated co-sponsorship memos indicating their intention to introduce similar legislation in the upper chamber. CCAP will continue to monitor developments of this legislation to evaluate the potential impacts that the proposed Lightning Plan would have on counties across Pennsylvania.

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## PENNDOT INVESTS IN SOUTHCENTRAL ROADS & BRIDGES

On April 22, PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll joined local leaders and transportation partners to **spotlight** the Shapiro's Administration's \$947.3 million investment in 124 transportation infrastructure projects across the southcentral region this year. This significant funding includes more than \$402 million continuing from 2024, covering the region that spans Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Perry, and York Counties.

This investment will support the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and resurfacing of 121 miles of highway, as well as work on 16 bridges. While this funding marks critical progress, counties continue to advocate for a more flexible and sustainable approach to transportation funding- one that empowers local governments to better address long-term needs in roads, highway, and bridge construction.

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## IFO ISSUES APRIL REVENUE UPDATE

The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released the monthly revenue **update** for April 2025, showing that General Fund collections for the month totaled \$6.21 billion, which is \$420 million (7.3%) higher than the IFO's official estimate. In particular, collections from personal income tax and sales and use tax exceeded the IFO's monthly projections by \$367 million and \$82 million, respectively. April 2025 collections were \$528 million (9.3%) higher than during the same month of the previous year.

Fiscal year-to-date (FYTD) state revenues for FY 2024-2025 through the end of April continue to outperform the IFO's official estimate by \$592 million (1.5%) for a total of \$39.44 billion. Additionally, year-to-date collections are \$951 million (2.5%) higher compared to this time last year.

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