

Legislative Locator

The Legislative Locator is a Bimonthly Publication of The Pennsylvania Municipal League



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May 2025

Competing Proposals for Local Government Advertising Flexibility

The League and PSATC are strong advocates for a modernized approach to public notice advertising. There are two major proposals that address the current requirement for local governments to advertise public notices.

The first proposal, [Senate Bill 194](#) introduced by Senator Doug Mastriano, would provide local governments with options for advertising public notices. The bill would authorize local governments to choose from a menu of advertising options, including: a newspaper generally circulated in the local government's county; the public website of the local government; the public website of a newspaper; or a website with a primary purpose for posting public notice advertisements. *The League and PSATC support this legislation because it provides flexibility, promotes local decision making, and implements cost effective measures to publish public notices.*

The second proposal, [House Bill 1291](#) introduced by Representative Bob Freeman, would expand the definition of a newspaper of general circulation. If a traditional newspaper of general circulation exists, then the current requirement must continue to be met. If such a newspaper does not exist, the notice must be posted in a digital newspaper. If neither exist, then the notice must be published in a free newspaper of general circulation. Newspapers would also be required to post each notice on the statewide publicly accessible website maintained by the PA News Media Association. *The League and PSATC oppose this legislation because it maintains the current advertising requirement while providing very limited alternatives to publish public notices, which will ultimately continue to be costly for taxpayers.*

Please [visit our advocacy action center](#) to ask your Senator to encourage the Senate Local Government Committee to consider Senate Bill 194.

Take Action

The League's Call for Resolutions

As a member driven organization, it is important we hear from you to accurately represent your municipality's needs with the General Assembly.

Each spring, League members receive the opportunity to submit policy suggestions through resolutions, shaping The League's policy agenda. Simply propose a [policy resolution](#) during our district meetings and member appreciation tour or reach out to the Governmental Affairs team with any ideas. Proposed resolutions will be considered during the Annual Municipal Leadership Summit by the resolutions committee and full League membership. This is a particularly important process because it sets the future policy priorities and positions of The League.

View The League's [2024 adopted resolutions](#) as a sample.

Cosponsor Memos

Messaging Apps and Document Retention

Senator Jarrett Coleman has announced his intention to introduce two pieces of legislation. The first would prohibit a messaging application that is configured to prevent the maintaining or preserving of a record as required by law, from being installed or accessed on state and local government owned devices. The second would amend the Right to Know Law providing clarity over electronic record retention requirements, including messaging apps, texts, and emails.

Fire Insurance Escrow Law

Senator David Argall has announced his intention to introduce legislation amending the Fire Insurance Escrow Law to increase the amount recoverable from fire loss from \$7,500 to \$18,000.

Legislation Affecting Local Government

Reliable Energy Siting and Electric Transition (RESET) Board

House Energy Committee, April 23, 2025

[House Bill 502](#) (1479), introduced by Representative Mandy Steele, would establish the Reliable Energy Siting and Electric Transition (RESET) Board to fast track energy supply sites in the commonwealth, resulting in the preemption of local zoning authority.

The Board would be responsible for facilitating the development of new energy generating facilities, while limiting adverse impacts on human and environmental health and safety by issuing reliable energy supply certificates. Applications to construct energy facilities must be submitted to the Board for approval. The Board must hold at least one public hearing within 45 days of receiving an application. The Board must also consult with any municipality in which the proposed facility would be located. However, this bill would completely preempt local zoning authority with two minor exceptions: one, a facility cannot be in a residential zone; and two, a facility cannot be in a previously sought location that was denied by a municipality. The Board must approve or deny an application within 90 days.

The bill would also establish the PA Siting Advisory Council, of which The League and other stakeholder representatives would be members. The Council would help the Board by providing recommendations for siting, land use, and public participation.

COLA Increase for Retired Municipal Police and Fire

First Consideration in the House, May 7, 2025

[House Bill 1289](#) (PN 1470), introduced by Representative Steven Malagari, would amend Act 147 of 1988 known as the Special Ad Hoc Municipal Police and Firefighter Postretirement Adjustment Act mandating a COLA beginning in 2026 to retired municipal police officers and firefighters on the following schedule:

- \$250/month if retired for at least 10 years, but less than 15 years;
- \$375/month if retired at least 15 years, but less than 20 years; and
- \$500/month if retired at least 20 years.

The bill provides reimbursement from the state's General Fund. Municipalities must submit a certification to the Auditor General by April 1 of each year to receive reimbursement. Lastly, if a retiree is receiving more than one municipal pension, COLA payments would be reduced so that the retiree's payment does not exceed the amount specified above. If the retiree receives payments under the 2002 adjustment, the payment would also be reduced.

Multi-Unit Dwellings and Mixed-Use Development in Commercial Zones

House Local Government Committee, May 13, 2025

[House Bill 1459](#) (PN 1712), introduced by Representative Josh Siegel, would preempt local zoning by mandating that a municipal zoning ordinance allow, as a permitted use by right, multi-unit dwellings or mixed-use development in a commercial zone that has a will-serve letter from both a municipal water and sewer system. Additionally, for such developments, a zoning ordinance may not require more than one parking space for each unit or an equivalent number of spaces through a shared parking agreement. A municipality can ask its county planning agency to review the proposed development and determine if the existing infrastructure is sufficient. The county planning agency can require the developer to make necessary infrastructure improvement upgrades to accommodate the development.

This bill would only be applicable to municipalities with a population of over 5,000 situated in a county that had an increase in population in the most recent census.

Municipality is defined as a city, including a city with a home rule charter, township, borough or incorporated town.

Local Preemption Regarding Utility Services

First Consideration in the Senate, May 13, 2025

[Senate Bill 311](#) (PN 436), introduced by Senator Gene Yaw, would amend Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) preempting municipalities regarding utilities and sources of energy.

A municipality would be prohibited from adopting a policy that: restricts, or has the effect of restricting or prohibiting, the connection or reconnection of a utility service based on the source of energy; the ability of an individual or entity to use an authorized utility provider; or discriminates against a utility service provider based on the nature or source of the service.

The bill would also preserve a municipality's authority to manage or operate a publicly owned utility, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from municipal facilities and operations; and exercise land use authority in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code.

House and Senate Session Days 2025

House

June 2-4, 9-11, 16-18, 23-27, 30

Senate

June 2-4, 9-11, 23-30

**reminder - session dates are subject to change*



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