

Legislative Locator

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



July 2025

Take Action Alert

Cosponsor Memo Introduced to Increase the Local Services Tax

A bipartisan [cosponsorship memo](#) introduced by Representatives Jamie Flick and Ismail Smith-Wade-El proposes an increase to the Local Services Tax (LST). Currently, the tax is capped at \$52. The future legislation would increase the cap to \$156, providing all municipalities with the option to decide if an increase would help their fiscal outlook.

Please reach out to your Representative through our grassroots advocacy tool and ask them to sign on as a cosponsor to this important measure! Please feel free to personalize the letter with information specific to your municipality.

Take Action

Artificial Intelligence and the Right-to-Know Law: Be Aware of the Risks Office of Open Records

Liz Wagonseller, Executive Director

Recently, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) matters has become increasingly commonplace. While nothing currently prohibits the use of AI when crafting a request, appeal, or submission to the Office of Open Records (OOR), users should be aware of the risks before doing so.

AI chatbots are currently not reliable tools for preparing submissions under the RTKL and should not be considered a substitute for legal counsel or professional representation. These tools frequently generate inaccurate or misleading information, including fabricated legal citations, erroneous summaries of case law, and false quotations from court decisions and OOR Final Determinations.

Such errors—commonly referred to as “AI hallucinations”—involve the creation of content that may appear authentic but is factually incorrect or entirely fictitious. Filings to the OOR have included citations to non-existent cases, mischaracterizations of legal precedent, erroneous summaries of case law, and invented language attributed to legal authorities. Parties using AI-generated content do so at their own risk and remain responsible for ensuring the accuracy of anything they submit during an OOR appeal. Parties should never rely upon AI for legal advice.

The submission of AI-generated content without independently verifying the accuracy of its statements may subject parties to sanctions. Repeated submission of unverified AI-generated material—especially after prior inaccuracies have been identified—may result in additional penalties. Under the RTKL, courts have the authority to impose sanctions, including fines and attorney’s fees, for frivolous arguments. See 65 P.S. § 67.1304(b), (c). Knowingly submitting false information to the Office of Open Records (OOR) or a court may also carry criminal

consequences under Pennsylvania law. See 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904(a). Finally, OOR Appeals Officers have the discretion to reject any filing that includes false statements, misrepresentations, fictitious legal citations, or duplicative content generated by AI.

While AI may be useful in some contexts, it currently struggles in the RTKL setting. Please do not submit AI-generated content to the OOR without first checking its accuracy. Parties are encouraged to point out false statements, nonexistent legal precedent, and misrepresentations, whether AI-generated or otherwise, to their assigned Appeals Officer.

When processing and responding to RTKL requests, Agency Open-Records Officers (AORO) should be aware that they may be presented with nonexistent or misleading legal precedent that would appear to require the release of information that is otherwise exempt or confidential. AOROs should direct any questions about the authenticity of legal precedent to their solicitor(s).

Share Your Feedback to Shape the Future of the Chesapeake Bay

Local governments are crucial partners in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and now is a critical time to help shape the future of this work. The [Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership](#) is revising the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), a road map to protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

From July 1 through September 1, the Partnership is accepting public feedback on these proposed changes. Input from local governments is vital to ensure the updated goals and strategies reflect real-world needs and on-the-ground priorities.

Ready to make your voice heard? Submit comments on the [draft revised Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) via email to comments@chesapeakebay.net.

Have questions or want to learn more before submitting feedback? Check out this handy [fact sheet](#) tailored specifically for local governments and join the Local Government Advisory Committee and Local Leadership Workgroup for an informational webinar on [Wednesday, August 13th at 12 - 1 pm](#).

[Register Here](#)

Cosponsor Memos

Decommissioning and Bonding of New Warehouses

Representative Gary Day announced his intention to introduce legislation requiring the owners of newly built warehouses to post financial guarantees for their activities by setting reasonable decommissioning and bonding amounts to help resolve challenges around properly decommissioning a warehouse.

Electric Low-Speed Scooters

Senator Devlin Robinson has announced his intention to introduce legislation allowing a second class, second class A, or third class city to authorize an electric low-speed scooter program by ordinance.

Shelter First Act

Senator Nikal Saval has announced his intention to introduce legislation requiring municipalities to provide adequate indoor spaces for people experiencing homelessness before enforcing any ordinance that criminalizes living outside.

Enacted Legislation

Act 3 of 2025
House Bill 209
Signed: June 27, 2025
Effective: Immediately

[Act 3](#) amends the Second Class Township Code. Currently the Code states ordinances become effective five days after adoption. This act removes that language and instead makes ordinances effective immediately unless a later date is stated in the ordinance.

Act 25 of 2025
Senate Bill 466
Signed: June 30, 2025
Effective: Immediately

[Act 25](#) allows those who successfully complete fire suppression training as a condition of employment to receive an equal number of credit hours toward Firefighter I certification.

The act also allows a fire or EMS company to make a request to the Office of the State Fire Commissioner to extend the application deadline of the Fire & EMS Grant Program for an additional 45 days if they are experiencing hardship which prevents them from submitting their application by the initial deadline, provided they request this extension within 30 days of the initial deadline. The Commissioner may extend the period to submit required reports for the grant program for an additional 15 days at the request of a fire or EMS company once every three years.

Act 28 of 2025
House Bill 103
Signed: July 7, 2025
Effective: 180 days

[Act 28](#) amends Title 30 (Fish) adding a new chapter to allow municipalities, law enforcement agencies, and the PA Fish and Boat Commission to address at-risk, derelict, and abandoned boats.

It authorizes a municipality or law enforcement officer to identify an at-risk, derelict, and or abandoned boat, and within seven days, provide notice to the PA Fish and Boat Commission of the discovery. Notice must also be provided to the boat owner through certified mail, in person, or electronic means to request the boat be removed, repaired, or salvaged within 14 days of notice. If the owner fails to complete the request within the given time frame, then the municipality may remove, store, or junk the boat. If the boat owner cannot be identified, the municipality or law enforcement agency must place a public notice in both a newspaper of general circulation and online.

If the boat is in storage, the owner has 30 days within the notice to claim the boat and pay all outstanding costs and fines. If the owner fails to claim the boat within 30 days, the owner loses any rights to claim the boat and would be responsible for any restitution costs. A municipality or law enforcement agency may recover costs incurred by the removal, storage, or junking of a boat. Lastly, the act provides for a list of offenses and respective penalties for any boat owners who intentionally disregard notices.

Legislation Affecting Local Government

Aggravated Assault Against Municipal Workers

[House Bill 956](#) (PN 1975), introduced by Representative Malcom Kenyatta, would amend Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) adding an employee of any county, city, borough, incorporated town, township home rule, optional plan or charter municipality, or municipal authority to the current list of “enumerated persons” against whom any attempt of bodily injury would be considered aggravated assault.

Tax-Exempt Property Municipal Assistance Act

First Consideration in the House, June 25, 2025

[House Bill 985](#) (PN 2023), introduced by Representative Robert Freeman, would establish the Tax-Exempt Property Municipal Assistance Act to provide financial assistance to eligible municipalities to help off-set the cost of hosting a high percentage of tax-exempt properties. Eligible municipalities must have at least 15% tax-exempt property and meet at least one of the following: the median household income is within 115% of the statewide median household income or the municipality is a county seat.

The legislation provides a formula for distributing funds to eligible municipalities. Revenue for this proposal would come from the Johnstown Flood Tax, which taxes liquor at retail and is currently allocated to the state’s general fund.

Public Worker Safety and Protection

First Consideration in the House, June 30, 2025

[House Bill 1629](#) (PN 1970), introduced by Representative Chris Rabb, would add a new chapter to Title 71 (State Government) requiring public employers to develop numerous workplace violence prevention measures for outdoor public workers, which are defined in the bill and includes a range of local government employees. Public employer is broadly defined as a public entity or agency employing outdoor public workers.

The bill would mandate the adoption and implementation of a workplace violence prevention plan, which shall include: procedures for identifying risks factors; methods to reduce risk; incident reporting and investigating; protocols for response to incidents; employee training; and worker support including paid leave and legal support.

Pennsylvania Home Preservation Act

Senate Urban Affairs and Housing Committee, June 30, 2025

[House Bill 1650](#) (PN 1972), introduced by Representative Lindsay Powell, would establish the PA Home Preservation Grant Program within DCED for the purpose of providing grants to local governments or their subgrantees to improve existing housing stock. Expenditures may not exceed \$50,000 per unit and must address habitability, improve energy and water efficiency or make units accessible. The household income of a unit owner may not exceed 80% to 120% of the area median income. Grant awards would be competitive and based on need as demonstrated by applicants. The governor’s budget proposal included \$50 million for this program.

Senator Argall and Senator Saval have introduced corresponding legislation, [Senate Bill 876](#), which was referred to Senate Urban Affairs on June 24, 2025.

Unauthorized Encampments on Private or Public Property

House Local Government Committee, June 25, 2025

[Senate Bill 780](#) (PN 837), introduced by Senator Joseph Picozzi, would amend Title 68 (Real and Personal Property) adding a chapter entitled “Encampments.” The legislation would prohibit unauthorized encampments and require municipalities to clear encampments on private or public property if the owner does not consent.

The legislation would give a private right of action to an “interested person” defined as a resident or owner of real property within 1,600 feet of an unauthorized encampment as presumed to be adversely impacted. An interested person may petition the municipality where an encampment is located to determine if it constitutes a public nuisance as defined in the bill. If the municipality determines a public nuisance exists, it shall notify the property owner that it must eject the encampment or give express consent for it to remain. If the municipality does not take action within 90 days, the petitioner may commence action in Commonwealth Court. Property owners who do not act may be assessed a civil penalty not to exceed \$250 per violation per day.

If a property owner gives express consent for the encampment, it shall abate any condition of nuisance and comply with any health or safety regulations of the municipality and shall be liable for any dangerous conditions on the property. If the property owner is a municipality, it waives any claim to governmental immunity if it consents to the encampment remaining. Additionally, Senate Bill 780 would give interested persons a private right of action to seek relief and actual damages against a property owner, including reasonable expenses if a final determination is granted in their favor.

Upon failure of a property owner to comply or upon a court’s decision that the camp is a nuisance, a municipality would be required to remove the encampment and mitigate any nuisance. A municipality may collect the cost of work, plus an additional 10% from the owner.

Finally, the bill would require a municipality to give encampment residents seven days advance notice of removal, allow an opportunity for individuals to remove personal property, and take steps to promote access to homeless services.

House and Senate Session Days 2025

House

August TBD

September 22-24, 29-30

October 1, 6-8, 27-29

Senate

August TBD

September 8-10

October 20-22, 27-29

**reminder - session dates are subject to change*



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