

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

COUNTY PRIORITIES SPOTLIGHT: 911 SUNSET LESS THAN 100 DAYS AWAY, NEEDS IMMEDIATE ACTION

What's the Path Forward for 911 in Pennsylvania?	
REAUTHORIZE/ EXTEND THE SUNSET WITH A \$2.30 SURCHARGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for investments in NG911, county operations and staffing to ensure the system is meeting the needs of commonwealth residents Maintains county "buy-in" to the system (approx. 10-15% or \$60 million) without relying on regular property tax increases to cover the county share
REAUTHORIZE/ EXTEND THE SUNSET WITH A \$1.97 SURCHARGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional funding will still be needed as the cost of the system will outweigh surcharge collections Counties would maintain 25-35% of system costs through property tax dollars over the next five years, requiring counties to provide over \$100 million to the system
EXTEND THE SUNSET WITHOUT A SURCHARGE INCREASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any sunset extension without additional funding will leave counties to make up the revenue difference of approx. \$150 million through property tax dollars (roughly 38% of the total system) The 911 funding formula cannot be adjusted and 15% interconnectivity funds will continue to supplement county allocations instead of being used for NG911 projects and upgrades
NO ACTION: 911 STATUTE LAPSES AFTER JAN. 31, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The surcharge resets to \$0 and counties will have to fully fund the 911 system at almost triple the rate they pay now solely using property tax dollars (approx. \$400 million) Residents can expect major property tax increases

With less than 100 calendar days until the January 31, 2024, sunset of the 911 statute, and only a handful of legislative session dates scheduled between now and the sunset, counties are growing increasingly anxious that there is no clear path forward to reauthorize the law or address critical county funding needs. Of the four scenarios presented above, only one outcome is acceptable to counties – enacting a full reauthorization that increases the 911 surcharge to \$2.30, coupled with a flat \$0.15 annual escalator. Counties implore the Governor and the General Assembly to come together, finalize a path forward and take immediate action on a 911 reauthorization that provides appropriate levels of funding to counties to support this important public safety system. Doing nothing and "kicking the can down the road" is not an option, as it will only create a significant burden on counties, and ultimately, county property taxpayers.

Time is of the essence – leaders in Harrisburg must come together to act now on a five-year reauthorization of the 911 statute that adequately funds the Next Generation 911 (NG911) system into the future. By doing so, we can ensure this critical public safety tool remains fully functional and available to every person in Pennsylvania who makes that call, often during their most vulnerable moments.

Additional resources on the 911 funding ask and impacts of a sunset extension can be found on the CCAP website, www.pacounties.org, under the Legislative Action Center.

DOG LAW UPDATES ENACTED BY GOVERNOR

Governor Shapiro recently signed **SB 746**, sponsored by Sen. Elder Vogel (R-Lawrence), into law as Act 18 of 2023, to update funding for the Pennsylvania Dog Law. Under the new act, the Department of Agriculture will be required to develop a statewide online platform for dog license sales to offer online sales options in all 67 counties. For those counties without an online option, the new statewide system will allow for the online sales regardless of county of application or residence. The new system is intended to supplement, not supplant, the current county system run by county treasurers as there is no authority removed from counties under Act 18. Further, the new law increases the cost of dog licenses by \$2 in 2025 and another \$1 in 2027 while also increasing the compensation to be collected by the issuing agency. While compensation remains the cost of a postage stamp plus \$1, the compensation for each lifetime license sold will be \$3. Other provisions included in Act 18 adjust cost of annual fees for kennels and establish

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SECRETARY RESIGNS

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Rich Negrin resigned October 26 and will remain on medical leave until December 9. Executive Deputy Secretary Jessica Shirley will serve as acting secretary while the administration conducts a search for a nominee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON DISABLED VETERANS' PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

On October 27, the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee held a hearing on two legislative proposals to expand disabled veterans' real estate tax exemptions. Specifically, the hearing focused on [HB 1227](#), sponsored by Rep. Christina Sappey (D-Chester), and [HB 1401](#), sponsored by Rep. Tarah Probst (D-Monroe). Counties agree there are public policy reasons for providing tax exemptions, including those that are currently offered to disabled veterans, and in [written commentary](#) CCAP noted general support for the expansion criteria outlined in HB 1227. For instance, the bill would exclude USDVA disability income from calculations used to determine financial need, remove the requirement for a veteran to have served in a war or conflict, and allow veterans residing in a long-term care facility to remain eligible for the exemption if they still own their residence. In addition, benefits would be extended to spouses of members of the armed forces who are killed in the line of duty or declared missing in action, or veterans who would have been declared disabled but died from that disability before a determination was made,

However, counties indicated opposition to HB 1401, as it would provide for partial exemptions based on partial disability that would create logistical challenges related to calculating those partial exemptions. The partial exemptions would also increase the number of impacted properties in any given county that would further shift tax burden to other county residents.

Both pieces of legislation are before the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee for consideration.

E-WASTE PROPOSAL SUBJECT OF COMMITTEE HEARING

On October 26, the House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee held a hearing on [HB 1607](#), a bill introduced by Rep. Lisa Borowski (D-Delaware), to provide for a statewide electronic waste recycling program under the Covered Device Recycling Act of 2010 (CDRA). Many counties provide supplemental recycling services to their constituents, including household hazardous waste pickup, recycling of electronics and tires, and recycling drop-off centers. One of the more challenging services many local governments, including counties, offer is the proper disposal and recycling of electronic devices, including desktop computers, laptop computers, computer monitors, computer peripherals and televisions.

Counties have long been concerned with the inconsistencies and funding shortfalls of the CDRA and have been working for several sessions to address concerns. CCAP submitted written [comments](#) on key pieces of the bill, namely focused on the creation of an "eco-deposit" intended to fund the statewide program through "collector incentive payments," how counties and other entities may participate in the program as collectors, and how the bill addresses convenience standards for the number and type of locations per county, ensuring there is no one-size-fits-all prescription. It was noted during the committee hearing that this hearing was the first of several steps in the process and the committee is looking to engage with stakeholders to improve upon the bill, creating an opportunity for counties to weigh in further as discussions continue this session.

BID LIMIT THRESHOLDS, DA SALARIES TO BE ANNOUNCED

As counties are preparing their 2024 budgets, CCAP often receives questions about the updated judicial salaries for the coming year, on which district attorney salaries are based, as well as the annual adjustments to bid limit thresholds and telephonic quote thresholds under the County Code. These benchmarks are typically published in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#) sometime in late November or early December for the following year, and CCAP will email counties directly with the information as soon as it is available, as well as including it in a future edition of the Legislative Bulletin.

CCAP NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS WORKSHOP AND FALL CONFERENCE

The [2023 CCAP Newly Elected Officials Workshop and Fall Conference](#) is scheduled to be held in-person at The Hotel Hershey in Dauphin County on November 18-21, 2023. The CCAP policy committees have met to develop their work plans and determine what issues should be advanced as part of the Association's 2024 county legislative priorities list, and CCAP members will vote, both in person and virtually, on the 2024 county legislative priorities during the business meeting of the conference, in addition to consideration of the Association's 2024 action plan and other association business. Information on the voting matters will be emailed to the CCAP membership in advance of the conference.

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