



## WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

May 15, 2009

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

### **STATE REVENUES CONTINUE ON STEEP DECLINE; STATE \$1.7 BILLION IN THE RED**

At Friday's revenue estimating conference, the state's three top economists determined that state leaders are facing a \$1.7 billion deficit for the 2009-10 fiscal year that begins on Oct. 1, 2009. The revenue forecast for next fiscal year show a \$984 million general fund deficit and a \$733 million School Aid deficit. Total general fund revenues are estimated to be down by 6.5 percent compared to the current year to a level of roughly \$7 billion total. To demonstrate the rapid rate of decline in state revenues, the total for general fund revenues in 2002 was \$10 billion. For townships, it is likely that revenue sharing payments for next fiscal year (beginning in October) will experience another 5 percent reduction on top of the 5 percent reductions being made this year. Estimates on sales tax collections, which fund the constitutional portion of revenue sharing, have been difficult for state economists to predict in recent months but are expected to be off by roughly 5 percent.

### **HOUSE APPROVES PRE-REGISTRATION OF 16-YEAR-OLDS**

On Thursday, the House approved two bills to allow most 16-year-olds the ability to pre-register to vote. HBs 4261, introduced by Rep. Lesia Liss (D-Warren) and 4337, introduced by Rep. Robert Jones (D-Kalamazoo), were approved by overwhelming margins. Under the bills, a 16-year-old could pre-register at a secretary of state office if he or she were at least 16 years of age but less than 17½ years of age, and had been issued either a graduated license or an official state personal identification card. A person who pre-registers to vote would become an elector at age 17½ and would eligible to vote at the first election after their 18th birthday. Under the bills, the secretary of state would send a notice to the appropriate local clerk through the Qualified Voter File (QVF) once the pre-registered person became 17½ years old. The local clerk would then send a voter registration card to the person who had pre-registered. The bills now move over to the Senate for consideration.

### **MICHIGAN WIND ENERGY REPORT EXPECTED SOON**

A state wind energy board charged with identifying areas in Michigan with the best wind energy production potential is finishing up its analysis and will release its proposed report and recommendations on June 2. The Wind Energy Resource Zone Board was established in December 2008 pursuant to PA 295, also known as the "Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act." The report, which is designed to be a recommendation to the Michigan Public Service Commission, will identify regions of the state with the highest wind energy production potential. The proposed report will be provided directly to local governments—counties, townships, cities and villages—in the regions identified by the board. Local governments will have 63 days to comment on the report. The board must also hold at least one public hearing before issuing a final report. MTA will provide additional details as the report is made public, including instructions on how township officials can provide comment. The 11-member board includes representatives from cities and villages; townships; Michigan Office of the Attorney General, the Michigan Public Service Commission, the renewable energy industry, the electric utility industry, independent transmission companies, environmental organizations, alternative energy suppliers, and the public at large.

### **MTA SUMMER LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE AUGUST 12-14, 2009**

Hold the dates of August 12-14, 2009, on your calendar for the MTA Summer Legislative Conference. It is being held at Bavarian Inn Lodge in Frankenmuth. Topics to be discussed include: government efficiency, whether Michigan needs a Constitutional Convention, recall & ethics, wind energy, road funding, Michigan's property tax structure, and a report about federal matters. Conference brochures including registration forms have been mailed to township officials. Information is also available on the MTA Web site, [www.michigantownships.org/summerforum.asp](http://www.michigantownships.org/summerforum.asp).

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