

Minnesota Association of Townships



2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

EFFICIENT. EFFECTIVE. ACCOUNTABLE. ACCESSIBLE.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

BACKGROUND:

- Townships maintain approximately 41% of Minnesota's roads (over 55,518 miles) as well as about 6,000 bridges, of which over 400 are on the deficiency list. Road and bridge expenditures are the largest expense for townships. Even the state's Town Bridge account is experiencing a shortfall.
- Township roads are vital to agriculture and local commerce, emergency vehicles, and school bus transportation. Without good, well-maintained town roads, produce doesn't make it to market on time, emergency vehicles can't get to people in danger as urgently as possible, and families can't get students to and from schools safely and on time.
- Current spending (near \$42 million) is extremely insufficient to meet the maintenance demands placed on township roads.

REQUEST:

- Current minimum maintenance funding levels for all townships should be \$100 million per year.
- MAT supports additional, sustainable, dedicated transportation funding for township roads and bridges.

TAXES AND STATE AID

- Hold townships harmless, dollar-for-dollar, from lost tax revenues by seeking increased, sustainable, and dedicated funding for the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) program.
- Maintain funding for Town Aid program to ensure full funding of the Town Aid formula.
- Ensure townships are not deprived of PILT revenue and township residents do not lose access to lakes, become landlocked, or other adverse impacts when public lands are transferred.

BROADBAND FUNDING & UNIVERSAL CELL PHONE COVERAGE

- Maintain broadband funding's focus on unserved areas
- Promote universal cell phone coverage for the many underserved rural areas.

RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND:

- Minnesota's rural Emergency Medical System is currently experiencing a critical funding shortfall due to vast geographic coverage, limited financial resources and reimbursements, and staffing challenges.

REQUEST:

- Support increased funding for rural emergency medical services
- Support "Treatment in Place" programs, the designation of EMS as an essential service, or other proposals from the EMS work group.



ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

ANNEXATION FAIRNESS

BACKGROUND:

- Current annexation law is unfair to townships and their residents. It allows cities to take township land over the objections of both the township and the landowner.
- MAT supports annexation by contract (also known as “orderly annexation”), which is the preferred method because it requires agreement of BOTH parties. This method is undermined when a city, not party to the contract, can take property that is already subject to a contract.
- Aside from undermining property owner’s rights, annexation by ordinance also contributes to urban sprawl and with it, additional state funding requests to subsidize expansion of municipal infrastructure.
- Cities can unfairly dictate and prohibit development on adjacent township land that is located up to 2 miles outside of a city’s borders and has not yet been annexed.

REQUEST:

- MAT opposes current law that allows cities to take township land over the objections (and without consent) of the township.

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION

- Require a written agreement with the township before a county can revert jurisdiction of a road to a township, which increases the township’s responsibilities, liabilities, and costs.
- Allow townships to place “Now Entering” signs on all state, county, and federal highways.
- Hold utilities responsible for damage they cause in or to road rights-of-way and related infrastructure including culverts and hold road authorities immune for damage to utilities whose infrastructure is improperly placed or marked.
- Establish an equitable formula of miles traveled by Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) based on what a conventional vehicle would have generated in fuel tax.

DATA PRIVACY OF PERSONAL INSURANCE INFORMATION

- Make a technical update to add the Minnesota Association of Township Insurance Trust (MATIT) to the list of other state municipal insurance pools that keep workers compensation and personal insurance data private.

ENVIRONMENT

- Noxious weeds are a threat to the environment, destroying natural habitat. Allow townships to hold the state and counties responsible for weeds in their rights-of-way.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

- Allow townships to determine which four hours they will have an authorized person available to accept filings on the last day to file for office.
- Update language to specifically allow “townships” to receive their share of pull-tab revenue, by updating “cities and counties” to “municipality” in state law.

MANDATE RELIEF AND COST REDUCTIONS

- Reduce costs of townships obtaining easements across state land, especially for roads sited on school trust land.
- Implement a 90-day notice periods for state agency hearings, actions, or comment periods.
- Clarify that only a landowner may appeal the decision of the township Board of Appeal & Equalization concerning the taxable value of a property.