

January 1, 2025



ILLINOIS COUNTY ACTION PROGRAM (ICAP) 2025

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217-679-3368

Counties COUNT!

Community Revitalization Loan

Proposed by: Community, Economic and Workforce Development Committee

Issue:

Counties can address the economic disparity between urban and rural communities, with a specific focus on how to stimulate investment, create jobs, and enhance the overall quality of life in economically distressed areas.

Proposal:

Provide counties with permissive authority to designate an area within their respective jurisdictions as a community redevelopment zone via ordinance. This proposal would amend sales taxes to implement a reduced sales tax rate of 3.25 percent for tangible personal property purchased from retailers located within designated community redevelopment zones. This reduced rate would not apply to certain types of tangible personal property already subject to a lower tax rate of 1 percent or 1.25 percent under existing tax laws.

Contracting for Waste Management Services

Proposed By: Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee

Issue:

Under existing law, counties can manage garbage collection and disposal in unincorporated areas. The Counties Code, however, does not have explicit language referencing contracts with waste management and collection companies, leading to a perceived lack of clarity.

Proposal:

Provide further clarity that counties may enter long-term contracts for garbage collection and disposal, with terms exceeding one year but not more than 30 years.

Expand Local Option Motor Fuel Tax to All Non-Home Rule Counties

Proposed By: Community, Economic and Workforce Development Committee

Issue:

Under current law, the only non-home rule counties permitted to impose a county Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) are DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will. Cook County imposes an MFT using its home rule authority.

Proposal:

Expand authority to impose a county MFT not to exceed 8 cents per gallon to all non-home rule county boards for the ongoing maintenance and construction of essential infrastructure.

Exempt Veterans' Assistance Commission Funding from PTELL

Proposed By: ISACo Staff

Issue:

P.A. 102-0732 (2022) made several changes to statutes affecting Veterans Assistance Commissions. These changes affected governance, administration and funding.

Current law establishes a minimum amount of annual funding for VACs equal to the lesser of .02% of the last known equalized assessed value (EAV) of the taxable property in the county OR an amount determined by the VAC to be "just and necessary." Disputes over what is "just and necessary" are evidence-based and resolved in circuit court. The 0.2% of EAV provision is found within the Public Aid Code (305 ILCS 12-21.13) and establishes a minimum levy necessary to be eligible for state funds. A county board is obligated to fund this minimum level, with the revenue derived from the property tax and/or the general corporate fund of the county.

Proposal:

Amend state law to exempt the VAC portion of the property tax levy from the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL – Tax Cap). This would restore the ability of county boards to fund other programs and services irrespective of the minimum funding now obligated for VACs.

Separate Veterans Assistance Commission Taxation Amount on Property Tax Bill

Proposed By: ISACo Staff

Issue:

P.A. 102-0732 (2022) wrote into state law a minimum amount of annual funding for Veterans Assistance Commissions (VACs) equal to the lesser of .02% of the last known equalized assessed value (EAV) of the taxable property in the county OR an amount determined by the VAC to be “just and necessary.” This law also removed county board decision-making over the amount of revenue allocated to a VAC and over how a VAC budgets this revenue. VACs are now county agencies that exist independently from elected county boards and are not subject to public accountability through elections.

Proposal:

Require property tax revenues that fund VACs to be listed separately from the county amount on property tax bills.

Wind and Solar Siting Changes

Proposed By: Wind and Solar Facility Task Force

Issue:

On January 27, 2023, Governor JB Pritzker signed P.A. 102-1123 into law. The law preempts county authority to enact local ordinances that prohibit wind and solar projects. ISACo created a Wind and Solar Facility Task Force to focus on wind and solar siting and zoning issues. The intention of the Wind and Solar Task Force is not to work toward repealing P.A. 102-1123, but to discuss and collect policy recommendations to provide counties with more flexibility when complying with the law.

Proposal:

Amend existing laws to enhance the regulation of renewable energy projects. Key proposals include requiring county or drainage district approval of farmland drainage plans, increasing the initial Financial Assurance for decommissioning costs with reevaluations every five years, and allowing its use for public safety or emergency repairs. The recommendations also include streamlining siting decisions within 60 days of public hearings, requiring NPDES permits for projects disturbing over one acre, and permitting counties to mandate earth berms for solar farms. Additionally, the proposal clarifies zoning rules, allow counties to deny special use permits in residential development areas, and require commercial solar projects near municipalities to follow municipal zoning regulations.