



ACOG LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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- 911 telephone fees increased from .75 cents to \$1.25 for any device that dials 911 (HB1590)
- Allocation to the Rural Fire Defense Program increased to \$1,100,000
- Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) Grant Program Funding maintained
- State Grocery Sales Tax Sustained

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

- Preserve and Protect Local Government Authority and Autonomy
- Protect Our Communities from Unfunded Mandates and Promote User Friendly Regulatory Reform
- Maintain and Enhance Funding for Existing Programs and New Projects that Improve the Quality of Life

KEY LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS

SMALL BUSINESS
EXPANSION & JOB
CREATION

A STATEWIDE REVOLVING LOAN FUND

HB 4064 (Wallace) is a proposed Statewide Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to be administered by each of the 11 statewide Oklahoma Councils of Government.

The Oklahoma Small Business Expansion and Jobs Act will utilize a one-time appropriation of \$16.6M to create 11 separate \$1.3M RLFs that are designed to support their regions.

This proposed RLF program will:

- Target small businesses of 50 employees or less to provide low-interest loans and gap financing
- COGs will collaborate with local financial institutions to provide key loans to local, small businesses that support community efforts and spur economic growth
- The proposed legislation also names the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) as the reporting and administration agency where each COG will submit quarterly loan reports

SUSTAIN STATE
GROCERY
SALES TAX



TAX RELIEF

ACOG is in favor of a fair and reasonable taxation policy.

Our municipal member governments are highly concerned that removal of the state sales tax on groceries will precipitate a political initiative to eliminate the municipal sales tax on groceries, as well.

This is why we are in opposition to **SB 2033 (Deevers)**.

Remember:

- Cities in Oklahoma are predominately dependent on sales tax revenue for operations
- Oklahoma is the only state in the US that does not allow municipalities access to ad valorem tax revenues, which places our cities at a distinctive economic disadvantage in comparison to municipalities in other states

ACOG is requesting a comprehensive approach to legislative tax reform and relief by addressing all potential revenue components, including the sales, income, and ad valorem tax structure for the state.

MUNICIPAL SANITARY SEWER STANDARDS & LITIGATION



ENCOURAGING MUNICIPALITIES TO MAINTAIN & UPGRADE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS

The purpose of **HB 3049 (Boles)** & **SB 1650 (Paxton)** is to establish reasonable and achievable standards for municipal sanitary sewer system operation that can also protect municipal revenues from nuisance claim litigation attacks. These bills are strongly supported by the **Oklahoma Municipal Assurance Group (OMAG)**.

Multiple municipalities in the ACOG region and across the state have battled million-dollar personal injury damage claims of annoyance and inconvenience in court.

This proposed legislation would:

- Ensure that there would be no right of recovery for a personal injury from a sanitary sewer overflow if the owner/operator of the municipal sanitary sewer system is working to maintain its sewage system in accordance with the guidelines and criteria set forth by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB)
- Outlines the 9 components municipal sewer systems must operate by to be protected from litigation

SUPPORTING RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

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VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER RETIREMENT

ACOG supports **SB 1524 (Green)** which would allow retired volunteer firefighters to continue volunteering without incurring certain reductions in their benefits and bars those individuals from serving as a fire chief.

CONTROLLED BURNS

SB1526 (Green) adjusts the processes for conducting controlled burns in consultation with the Forestry Division and shields agents of the division from liability exposure when combating fires or overseeing controlled burns.

FIGHTING CHANCE FOR FIREFIGHTERS

ACOG supports **HB 3573 (Pae)** that creates the Fighting Chance for Firefighters Act. It requires a plan offered by the Employees Group Insurance Division of OMES to provide coverage for annual comprehensive cancer screenings for lung, prostate, testicular, skin, colon, and breast cancer.



VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER INSURANCE POOL

ACOG supports **SB 1333 (Hall)** which transfers the Volunteer Firefighter Group Insurance Pool into the OMES Comprehensive Professional Risk Management Program.

INTEROPERABLE RADIOS

ACOG supports carryover legislation **SB 966 (Coleman)** which provides a revolving loan fund for an interoperable radio system that can be used by all state departments and public safety officials.

ENHANCING TAX REVENUE COLLECTION



SALE FOR RESALE

ACOG supports **SB 2025 (Rader)** which would give the Oklahoma Tax Commission the authorization to revoke or suspend a sales tax permit based on reporting activity. **This would improve the use of the sales for resale sales tax exemption and increase the efficiency of tax collection for municipalities.**

COMMONSENSE REGULATORY REFORM



COMMONSENSE TEST FOR LEGISLATION:

For decades local governments have fought a losing battle to prevent unfunded mandates that both the state and federal governments frequently enact.

Last session, **HB 2786 (Munson)** and **SB 495 (McCortney)** were filed stating that the Legislature, state agency, department, or commission shall not implement any mandate to any political subdivision of this State, unless a specific appropriation is made to fully fund the political subdivision for all costs related to the mandate.

ACOG strongly supports this carryover legislation thus creating a commonsense litmus test for all future legislative activity.

MENTAL HEALTH - HOMELESS ISSUE



MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

ACOG advocates for increased state funding in mental healthcare, hospitals, and staffing to specifically address the homeless issue. This augmentation in mental health funding would not only enhance the well-being of individuals but also prove advantageous for municipalities statewide.

The growing population of unhoused individuals has imposed a strain on municipal resources, both in terms of funding and staffing.

The mental health and homelessness issue has several moving parts. In 2023, **HB 2175** was signed into law to create the Behavior Health Workforce Development Fund – to allow for the expansion of the number of psychiatric residences. Additional steps are required to address this broad topic.

HB 3338 (Roe) has filed the Oklahoma Mental Health Reform Act of 2024. We look forward monitoring this shell bill as it evolves.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & FUNDING

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

ACOG supports carryover legislation **HB 2752 (Miller)** and pre-filed **SB 1923 (Alvord)** which would modify certain actions for pedestrians, as it pertains to safety. It also adds some language to clarify how a vehicle should pass around a roundabout (central island of a circular intersection).

SPEED LIMITS

ACOG is opposed to **HB 3894 (Ford)** that requires a minimum speed limit of 65 mph on an interstate or turnpike. These minimum speeds are too high and at times may create a dangerous driving environment.

COUNTY IMPROVEMENTS FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES

ACOG supports **SB 1421 (Rogers)** which modifies the apportionment of fees, taxes and penalties collected or received to the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges Act.



ROAD USER CHARGE PROGRAM

ACOG opposes **HB 2970 (Gann)** which would repeal the Oklahoma Road User Charge Program.

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
RESTRUCTURING (ODOC)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESTRUCTURING (ODOC)



Over the past few years, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) has had issues in fulfilling its role as the coordinating state agency for economic development. Numerous bills have been filed to change or restructure ODOC or to replace it with an entirely new agency.

ODOC MISSION

HB 3252 (Osburn) modifies the statement of needs and mission statement of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC)

OK to RELOCATE

SB 1335 (Garvin) creates the OK to Relocate Act which forms the OK to Relocate RLF for ODOC and requires the agency to establish a talent attraction program for the purpose of attracting out-of-state businesses to Oklahoma

CREATING OKLAHOMA'S MODERN PLAN FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION & EFFECTIVENESS

SB 1447 (Thompson, Kristen) creates the Oklahoma Office of Economic Development, Growth, and Expansion to serve as the state's lead economic development agency with ODOC playing a supporting role.

ACOG will closely monitor these bills but our word of caution to our legislators is that several of our most important programs are funded through ODOC:

- **REAP**
- **Sub-state Planning**
- **State Energy Program (SEP)**

So, whether you simply re-arrange the furniture or tear down the house and build a new one please be aware of the impact that any changes will have in the administration of the vital programs.

WATER RESOURCES

A variety of water-related bills have been introduced for the upcoming session, however, there needs to be greater focus on long-term drought relief. Even though ACOG does support some of the new bills, the proposed legislation does not effectively address this important issue. The availability of water becomes progressively more pronounced with each succeeding drought cycle and more challenging to resolve.

ACOG supports a more aggressive water resource planning effort both regionally and state-wide which will require extensive coordination with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board and increased funding from the Legislature.

DROUGHT COMMITTEE REALIGNMENT - SUPPORT

HB 3182 (PATZKOWSKY) requires the emergency drought committee to meet at the call of the Secretary of Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry when the Secretary declares that emergency drought conditions exist in the state.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE - SUPPORT

HB 3854 (CORNWELL) would set up a fund for small municipalities and their water infrastructure.

LEGISLATIVE WATCHLIST

REVENUE & TAXES

HB 2949 - McCall

SB 1618 - Garvin

SB 1680 - Green

SB 1863 - Stewart

SB 2025 - Rader

SB 2037 - Deevers

LOCAL AUTHORITY BILLS

HB 3296 - Bennett

HB 3578 - Pae

SB 1532 - Alvord

SB 1617 - Thompson (K)

SB 1652 - Prieto

SB 1815 - Newhouse

SB 1845 - Thompson (K)

 *Support*

 *Oppose*

 *Monitor*

 *Carryover*

 *Shell Bill*

FIREARM BILLS

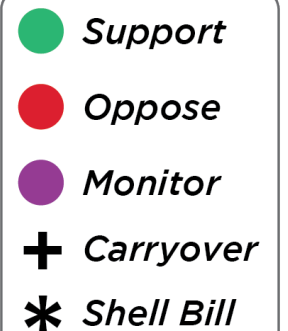
HB 2136⁺ - McDugle
SB 1870 - Standridge
SB 1936 - Kidd

MARIJUANA BILLS

HB 3355 - Marti
SB 1635 - Coleman

MENTAL HEALTH

HB 3338* - Roe
HB 2947* - Bashore
HB 2994* - West (J)



UNFUNDED MANDATES & USER-FRIENDLY REGULATORY REFORM

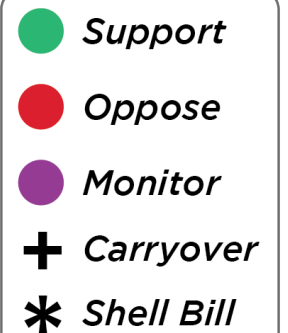


REGULATORY REFORM BILLS

HB 2786⁺ - Munson
SB 495⁺ - McCortney

UNFUNDED MANDATE BILLS

HB 3265 - Humphrey
HB 3754 - Hardin
SB 1316 - Bullard
SB 1801 - Dahm
SB 1854 - Weaver
SB 1928 - Standridge
SB 2026 - Weaver

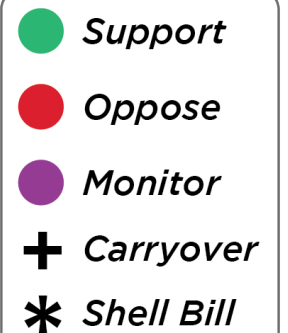


911 & PUBLIC SAFETY BILLS

HB 1924⁺ - Sims
HB 3897 - Ford
SB 966⁺ - Coleman

RURAL FIRE DEFENSE PROGRAM BILLS

HB 2979 - Kane
HB 2991 - West (J)
HB 3192 - Newton
HB 3573 - Pae
SB 1333 - Hall
SB 1524 - Green
SB 1526 - Green
SB 1779 - Bullard
SB 1842 - Thompson (K)



WATER RESOURCES BILLS

HB 2313 - Sims

HB 3049 - Boles

HB 3182 - Patzkowsky

HB 3193 - Newton

HB 3195 - Newton

HB 3854 - Cornwell

SB 1331 - Bullard

SB 1341 - Howard

SB 1406 - Bergstrom

SB 1352 - Bullard

SB 1650 - Paxton

SB 1781 - Boren

 *Support*

 *Oppose*

 *Monitor*

 *Carryover*

 *Shell Bill*

SEEK OUT PROGRAM FUNDING & IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE








TRANSPORTATION

- HB 2752⁺ - Miller
- HB 2970 - Gann
- HB 3213 - West (K)
- HB 3735 - Dempsey
- HB 3848* - Pittman
- HB 3894 - Ford
- HB 4146 - Turner
- SB 1290 - Kirt
- SB 1421 - Rogers
- SB 1469 - Haste
- SB 1923 - Alvord
- SB 1932 - Standridge

AIR QUALITY BILLS

- SB 1389 - Boren
- SB 1553 - Boren

-  Support
-  Oppose
-  Monitor
-  Carryover
-  Shell Bill

SEEK OUT PROGRAM FUNDING & IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE



JOB EXPANSION

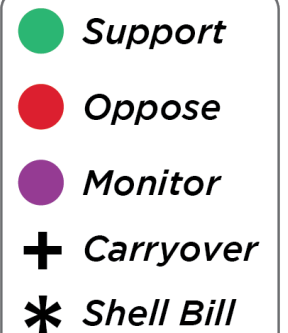
HB 4064 - Wallace
HB 4070 - Wallace
SB 1807 - Garvin

RURAL ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN (REAP) BILLS

HB 2508⁺ - Fugate
SB 2008 - Rader
SB 2033 - Howard

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ODOC)

HB 3252 - Osburn
HB 3424 - Archer
SB 1335 - Garvin
SB 1447 - Thompson (K)



APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

RURAL ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN (REAP)

REAP provides grants to small communities, towns, counties, and other organizations serving populations under 7,000 that have little or no funding capabilities.

There are currently 538 municipalities in Oklahoma under 7,000 in population (90% of all Oklahoma municipalities).

REAP grants can be used to fund capital improvements for infrastructure and public facilities, road and street construction and equipment for health and public safety.

In FY 2024 the REAP allocation was \$30 million, funded over 460 projects across the state and was also used to leverage almost \$50 million in funding for Community & Economic Development projects in rural communities.

FY 2025 Recommendation: Increase REAP funding by **\$14 million**, which by statute will distribute equal REAP allocations of **\$4 million to all 11 Oklahoma Councils of Government (COGs)**. **Fiscal Impact:** **\$14 million** above current allocation of \$30 million.

Please note that ACOG will monitor **SB 2033 (Howard)**, which increases REAP funding but also includes a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for loans to REAP eligible communities.



RURAL FIRE DEFENSE PROGRAM

The Rural Fire Defense (RFD) Program supports and equips rural fire departments in protecting lives and property of rural Oklahomans. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) contracts through Oklahoma Association of Regional Councils (OARC) for the COGs to employ RFD Coordinators who annually certify approximately 875 fire departments across Oklahoma for state operational funding and assist rural fire departments with training, grant writing, inventory and equipment support.

State funding for the RFD program was increased for FY 2024 per COG to \$100,000, which made a huge impact to the program.

FY 2025 Recommendation: Make the current **\$100,000 per all 11 Oklahoma COGs** a line item in the State budget through the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture and oppose any and all changes that may be proposed to the RFD Program.

Fiscal Impact: Maintain current allocation of \$1,100,00.



SUBSTATE PLANNING DISTRICT PROGRAM

The Substate Planning District Program allows Oklahoma's 11 designated Substate Planning Districts (COGs) to provide planning and technical assistance to local governments. Oklahoma COGs are the primary resource for many local governments to apply for federal and state grants, coordinate efforts to develop capacity to attract business investments and job creation and make the delivery of governmental services more effective.

Substate funding has declined from \$50,000 to its current level of \$13,400 for FY 2024. Maintaining adequate Substate funding is necessary for COGs to continue to provide essential intergovernmental services to local governments in their Districts.

FY 2025 Recommendation: Increase Substate planning funding to **\$50,000 per all 11 Oklahoma COGs** and make it a line-item in the State budget through the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

Fiscal Impact: **\$402,600** above current allocation of \$147,400.



Association of Central Oklahoma Governments 2024 Legislative Power Brunch

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