

2025 ACOG LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

MARK W. SWEENEY, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- 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 Effective Programs and New Projects that Improve the Quality of Life

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**KEY
LEGISLATIVE
REQUESTS**

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE TAX REFORM

TAX RELIEF

ACOG is in favor of a fair and reasonable taxation policy. **Taking a comprehensive approach that includes assessment of all forms of taxation would be more effective than band-aid adjustments.**

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

This is why we are in **opposition** to **SJR 12 (Deevers)** which would repeal the ad valorem tax entirely.

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**MUNICIPAL SANITARY
SEWER STANDARDS &
LITIGATION**

MUNICIPAL SANITARY SEWER STANDARDS & LITIGATION



ENCOURAGING MUNICIPALITIES TO MAINTAIN & UPGRADE SEWAGE OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

SB 650 (Paxton) proposes a shift in public policy on Sanitary Sewer Operation by rewarding municipalities that are meeting certain maintenance and operational standards with liability protection from nuisance-based tort claims.

BENEFITS:

- **Improved Water Quality:** Ensures better water quality for residents.
- **Resource Efficiency:** More efficient use of tax dollars.
- **Legal Protections:**
 - Offers legal protections against nuisance litigation for cities and towns that comply with sanitary sewer standards.
 - Encourages improvements in sanitary sewer systems and water quality protecting funding from nuisance liability exposure
 - Addresses Oklahoma Governmental Tort Claims Act (OGTCA) limits and addresses recent Court of Appeals decisions that impact exemptions under the OGTCA
- **Support for Cities and Towns:** Assists in upgrading and maintaining aging infrastructure, especially for towns with limited resources.

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**ENERGY
DIVERSIFICATION**

Unlike many other countries, the U.S. operates three separate power grids, each further divided by region. This means that when Central Oklahoma faces a severe weather event, such as the October 2020 ice storm, it must rely solely on its own region's grid, making recovery a costly and potentially life-threatening challenge.

Residents and businesses still rely on the traditional power grid to meet their needs, but localized power generation offers an alternative solution that is both reliable and sustainable.

Last session, HB 4065 established a framework for distributed power solutions. **ACOG proposes amending HB 4065 to include Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) by updating utility definitions, recognizing small-scale power sources like fuel cells and microgrids, and defining ownership and operation models.**

Please keep in mind that our largest priority is the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for fuel cells legislation currently in DC. The ITC will help ensure that production of stationary fuel cells remains in the United States (instead of China) and is affordable to business interests in Oklahoma and elsewhere.

ACOG goes on record to support the following proposed legislation with some conditions:

SB 93 (Prieto) provides authority, with limitations, for a non-utility owned microgrid to install wires across or along a public right of way. This is presumably designed to allow a microgrid to serve more than one private property, prohibiting any party other than a utility from crossing a public right of way with a wire is how the law protects the utility exclusive franchise.

SB 119 (Green) and **SB 241 (Thompson)** works together to create and fund a state tax rebate worth 6.67% of the capital investment for an eligible facility, which includes both gray and blue hydrogen production. It includes a limitation that the property must be at least 600 acres so it will have limited applicability and may be targeted at a specific known project. **We suggest they reduce that acreage limitation to whatever works for the site.**

SB 352 (Gollihare) gives the power of eminent domain to a gas distribution utility in addition to electric utilities. This would mean natural gas companies could install pipes over the objection of a private landowner. **There may be situations where this would make it easier for a microgrid to develop a project in Oklahoma.**

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

911 & PUBLIC SAFETY

CREATION OF THE OKLAHOMA EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

Under a guise to consolidate emergency communication functions under a single authority to enhance efficiency, reduce costs and ensure a unified approach to emergency response, **HB 2710 (Ford)**, would create the Oklahoma Emergency Communications Authority (OECA) and would add another level of government bureaucracy and take authority away from **911 ACOG** who has successfully provided the cities, towns and counties in its service area emergency services since 1988.

ACOG opposes HB 2710 as it does not protect our local governments' authority and autonomy and in essence is an unfunded mandate for more bureaucratic red tape.



BATTERY STEWARDSHIP ACT

ACOG **supports** **HB 1907 (Alonso-Sandoval)**, which creates the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in which residential, commercial, and industrial battery producers develop battery stewardship plans for proper collection and recycling of used batteries in all 77 counties. EPR fees established for DEQ to educate the public on battery stewardship and recycling.

Legislation is needed to protect public safety and property as battery fire incidents in Oklahoma are on the rise (including at waste facilities and refuse trucks) posing injury risks to workers, causing millions of dollars of property damage, and raising costs on all residents.

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**SUPPORTING RURAL
FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

FIREFIGHTERS PENSION & RETIREMENT FUND

ACOG **supports SB 432 (Frix)** with changes. The Oklahoma Rural Fire Coordinators suggest to **increase the monthly value for volunteer firefighters retiring after the effective date of the act to \$10 a month** which would increase the monthly payments per month, which in the future could serve as an incentive for department volunteer recruits.

RURAL FIREFIGHTER CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

HB 1078 (Smith) would create a fund under the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry to provide clothing allowance grants for rural firefighters. **ACOG conditionally supports this proposed legislation if revisions are made to remove the percentage of calls made to qualify.** As written, **HB 1078** requires 75% of all calls be made by a firefighter to be eligible for a grant. However, most of our rural firefighters in our service area, due to being a volunteer, do not even make more than 30% of calls.

RURAL FIREFIGHTER TRAINING GRANT PROGRAM

ACOG **opposes** HB 2759 (Caldwell). This proposed legislation would allow the State Fire Marshall to manage the rural firefighter training grant program and access to the operational funding that the Rural Fire Defense Program allocates for training.

CONSOLIDATION OF RURAL FIRE DEFENSE DISTRICTS

SB 708 (Hines) would consolidate fire protection districts. ACOG **opposes** this proposed legislation due to how consolidation could affect response times when fighting a fire in a district made even larger by consolidation.

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**COMMUNITY &
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

OKLAHOMA NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ACT

ACOG, in its role as the Capital Economic Development District (CAPEDD) of Oklahoma is an enthusiastic proponent of revitalizing neighborhoods, as evident in our award-winning program CERI Program. **ACOG supports SB 151 (Mann) which creates the Oklahoma Neighborhood Revitalization Act which would aid municipalities with populations less than 25,000 residents with beautification grants that could fund projects within CERI Planning Demonstration sites.**

MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM ACT

SB 923 (Nice) and SB 938 (Kirt) would create Municipal Workforce Housing Development Grant Program funded through the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency to offer financial assistance by grant to municipalities for the purpose of increasing the availability of workforce housing (mixed income, low income, and affordable housing) in the state. **ACOG supports this proposed legislation because it would implement a major goal set forth in the 2024 CEDS Report.**

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AUTHORITY &
POLICIES**

CHANGES TO LEGISLATIVE MUNICIPAL ZONING REGULATIONS & RESTRICTIONS

ACOG **opposes** SB 647 (Paxton) which would lessen the authority of a municipality's zoning authority. **This filed bill would impose detailed procedural requirements for zoning and land use decisions, which would limit a municipality's flexibility to make decisions based on local priorities and contextual needs.** It also de-emphasizes the role of comprehensive plans which could hinder cities and towns from aligning with their visions for growth.

FAIR ZONING ACT

HB 1051 (Dollens) would direct certain cities and municipalities to amend zoning ordinances and regulations and direct for zoning areas to not be exclusively designated for single-family housing. **ACOG opposes this proposed legislation due to mandating municipalities to diversify zoning decisions without regard to local concerns or control.**

REQUIRING PUBLIC VOTE FOR FORMATION OF TIFF DISTRICT

HB 1069 (Gann) would add increased state oversight, a complex approval process, and a possible shift of control over local decision. **ACOG opposes this filed bill that would require voter approval for specific TIFF District development plans and projects, transferring decision-making power from elected municipal officials and local planning bodies to the broader electorate, reducing the autonomy of municipal governments.**

MEETINGS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ACOG **supports SB 467 (Alvord)** which would allow county commissioners to discuss administrative, operation, and procedural matters of the board, even when a quorum is present, which leads to **enhanced government efficiency**.

PROHIBITING MUNICIPALITIES FROM MAINTAINING CERTAIN SERVICES

ACOG **opposes SB 484 (Standridge)** which would prohibit municipalities less than 300,000 to provide programs or services to homeless persons including maintaining a homeless shelter. **This proposed legislation imposes unnecessary regulations on the cities with less than 300,000 while shifting the homeless population problem on to cities with larger populations (Oklahoma City and Tulsa) resulting in an unfunded mandate.**

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**TRANSPORTATION
SAFETY & FUNDING**

AMENDING NO TEXTING WHILE DRIVING

ACOG **supports** the amendatory language in **HB 2263 (Miller)** which clarifies that it is unlawful for any driver to send, read, or compose a text message while driving and increases the fees for fines and costs to law enforcement.

UNLAWFUL TO NOT BE BUCKLED UP IN THE BACK SEAT

A priority of the ACOG Board of Directors, ACOG **supports SB 117 (Pederson)** which would make it unlawful for any child 16 years and below to ride in the back seat of a car without wearing a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt system. **Oklahoma is the only state in the Union without this law.**

COUNTY IMPROVEMENTS FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES

ACOG **supports SB 258 (Haste)** which modifies the apportionment of fees, taxes and penalties collected or received to the **County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) Act.**

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

WATER RESOURCES

ESTABLISHING A MORATORIUM ON ISSUING GROUNDWATER PERMITS

ACOG **opposes SB 133 (Burns)** that would place a moratorium on groundwater permits since the studies conducted by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board are a lengthy process and **this filed bill does not set up a realistic timeline for a study to be conducted, therefore leaving property owners and municipalities in limbo.**

CREATING THE OKLAHOMA PFAS ACT

ACOG **supports SB 271 (Rader)** which would create the Oklahoma PFAs Act and **give the Department of Environmental Quality the authority to make rules related to the receipt, storage, treatment and disposal of PFAS substances including rules related to a waste exclusion plan.**

PROHIBITING LAND APPLICATION OF BIOSOLIDS

ACOG **opposes SB 268 (Jett)** which prohibits the land application of biosolids. **ACOG philosophically supports this bill. However, municipalities need time to reevaluate the impact on solid waste fees and determine where they can realistically dispose of the sludge, since lined landfills must be used and there are only four such landfills in Central Oklahoma.**

ESTABLISHING A MORATORIUM ON LAND APPLICATION OF BIOSOLIDS

ACOG **opposes SB 3 (Green)** because this **filed bill** does not define what biosolids or sludge consists of, it bans multiple substances for land application and does not give options to municipalities on disposal.

BAN BIOSOLIDS AS FERTILIZER

ACOG **opposes HB 1726 (Shaw)** because of the possible economic impacts on local governments. **Implementing the required restrictions, remediation, and infrastructure upgrades for alternative waste management would impose significant financial costs on local governments.**

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

**LEGISLATIVE
WATCHLIST**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY & AUTONOMY

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TAXES

HB 1519* - Banning
HB 2229 - Munson
SB 119 - Green
SB 241 - Thompson
SB 239 - Wingard
SB 1123 - Standridge
SJR 12 - Deevers

FIREARMS

HB 1358 - Olsen
HB 2822 - Steagall
SB 84 - Sacchieri





OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY

HB 1050 - Dollens
HB 1051 - Dollens
HB 1069 - Gann
HB 1152 - Banning
SB 347 - Hicks
SB 400 - Coleman
SB 404 - Stewart
SB 433 - Weaver
SB 467 - Alvord

SB 468 - Alvord
SB 484 - Standridge
SB 647 - Paxton
SB 651 - Stanley
SB 694 - Alvord

911 & PUBLIC SAFETY

HB 2710 - Ford

 Support
 Oppose
 Monitor
 Shell Bill

REGULATORY REFORM & UNFUNDED MANDATES



OPEN RECORDS

HB 1409 - Crosswhite-Hader
SB 622 - Howard
SB 1097 - Standridge

BIOSOLIDS & OTHER SUBSTANCES

HB 1726 - Shaw
SB 3 - Green
SB 268 - Jett
SB 271 - Rader





ENERGY

DIVERSIFICATION

SB 93 - Prieto
SB 119 - Green
SB 241 - Thompson
SB 352 - Gollihare

OTHER REGULATORY REFORM

HJR 1003 - Jenkins	SB 133 - Burns
HB 1106* - Manger	SB 259 - Howard
HB 1156 - Cornwell	SB 473 - Rader
HB 1450 - Shaw	SB 613 - Boren
HB 1451 - Shaw	SB 650 - Paxton
HB 1452 - Shaw	SB 914 - Howard
HB 1813 - Newton	SB 1008 - Murdock
HB 1817 - Newton	
HB 2162 - Dobrinski	

 *Support*
 *Oppose*
 *Monitor*
 *Shell Bill*

REGULATORY REFORM & UNFUNDED MANDATES



911 & PUBLIC SAFETY

HB 1907 - Alonso-Sandoval





SB 206 - Woods

SB 405 - Alvord

RURAL FIRE

HB 1052 - Kelley

SB 708 - Hines

-  *Support*
-  *Oppose*
-  *Monitor*
-  *Shell Bill*

MAINTAIN & ENHANCE PROGRAM FUNDING



911 & PUBLIC SAFETY

SB 58 - Weaver

RURAL FIRE





HB 1078 - Smith

HB 1425* - Smith

HB 1426* - Smith

HB 1631 - Sneed

SB 432 - Frix

-  *Support*
-  *Oppose*
-  *Monitor*
-  *Shell Bill*

MAINTAIN & ENHANCE PROGRAM FUNDING





The logo for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), featuring the lowercase letters "acog" in a gold serif font inside a dark blue circle with a gold border.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

HB 1637* - Sneed
HB 2230 - Munson
SB 35 - Hicks
SB 55 - Nice

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HB 2019 - Pae
HB 1345* - Eaves
HB 2236 - Munson
SB 151 - Mann
SB 249 - K. Thompson
SB 287 - Pugh
SB 923 - Nice
SB 938 - Kirt
SB 820 - Boren

 *Support*
 *Oppose*
 *Monitor*
 *Shell Bill*

MAINTAIN & ENHANCE PROGRAM FUNDING





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TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & FUNDING

- HB 2263 - Miller
- HB 2897 - Townley
- SB 67 - Frix
- SB 73 - Woods
- SB 117 - Pederson
- SB 126 - Woods
- SB 173 - Nice
- SB 258 - Haste
- SB 260 - Mann
- SB 493 - Standridge

WATER RESOURCES

- HB 1544 - Patzkowsky
- HB 1807 - Newton
- SB 92 - Bullard
- SB 196 - Green
- SB 265 - Murdock

-  *Support*
-  *Oppose*
-  *Monitor*
-  *Shell Bill*

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS

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 2025 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 2026 Recommendation: Increase REAP funding by **\$6 million**, which by statute will distribute equal REAP allocations of **\$3.27 million to all 11 Oklahoma Councils of Government (COGs)**. **Fiscal Impact:** **\$6 million** above the current allocation of \$30 million.



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 in FY 2025 per COG was \$100,000, which made a huge impact to the program.

FY 2026 Recommendation: Increase the current **\$100,000 to \$125,000 per all 11 Oklahoma COGs** and make it a line item in the State budget through the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry.

Fiscal Impact: An increase of \$275,000 for a total allocation of \$1,375,000.



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 \$27,272.72 for FY 2025. Maintaining adequate Substate funding is necessary for COGs to continue to provide essential intergovernmental services to local governments in their Districts.

FY 2026 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: **\$250,000** above current allocation of \$300,000.

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA GOVERNMENTS 2025 LEGISLATIVE POWER BRUNCH

www.acogok.org/2025LPB

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