



2024

FEDERAL & STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Kent County adopts a legislative agenda annually to guide federal and state legislators on issues directly impacting our operations and services.

The list is not exhaustive and does not limit the County from addressing other important matters as they arise during the session.

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Ensure Long-Term Fiscal Stability for Local Government

Kent County receives constitutional and statutory revenue sharing to support essential governmental services. However, the payments to local government units have not kept pace with the rising costs associated with delivering these services.

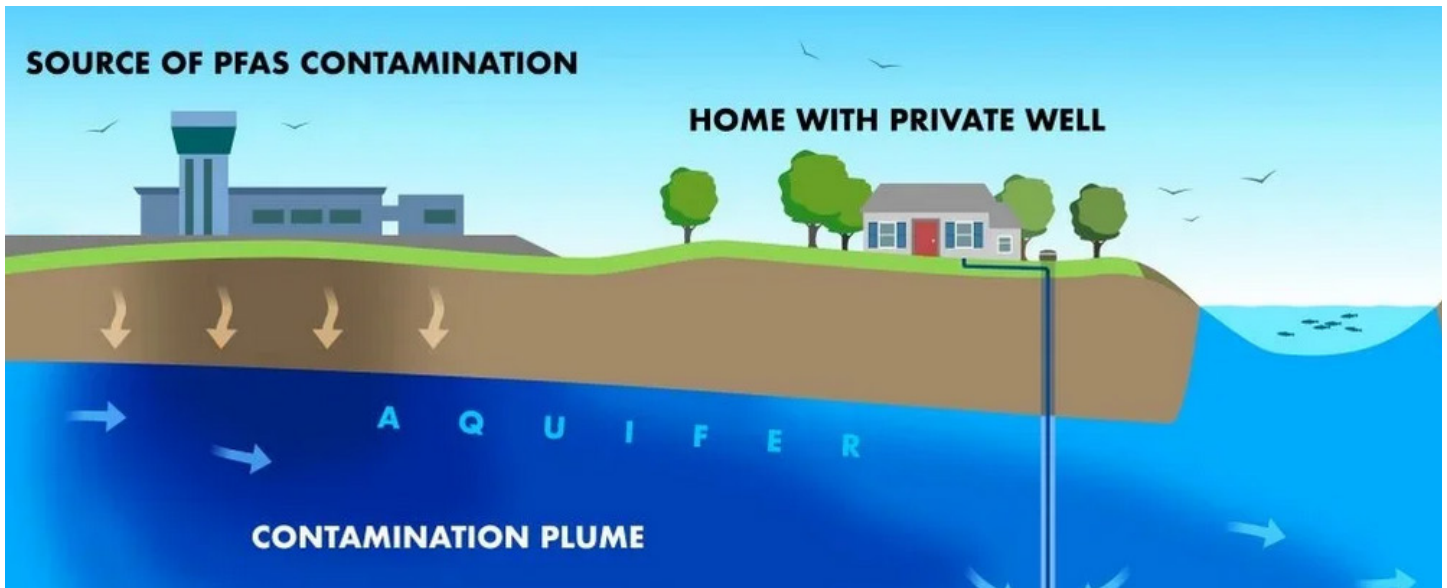
- Advocate for a revenue sharing trust fund created through a statutory earmark of the State's sales tax to provide greater stability and predictability to fund core government services (House Bills 4274 and 4275)
- Oppose any unfunded mandate(s) for new services and ensure sufficiently funded revenue streams for existing mandated services
- Support legislation to shift the Homestead Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans to a State income tax credit to preserve the integrity of local tax revenues (Senate Bill 96 and House Bill 4741)

Improve Solid Waste Management

Michigan's Beverage Container Act, also known as the "Bottle Bill," currently prohibits material recovery facilities (MRFs) from receiving the distribution of revenue from the collection of bottle deposit containers, and there is no existing statutory pathway for MRFs to receive the deposit value.

- Support legislation allowing municipal MRF operators to receive the deposit value for containers processed at their facilities (House Bill 4904 and Senate Bill 453)





Address Environmental Contamination Challenges

PFAS

PFAS, a man-made chemical used in industry and consumer products, is increasingly recognized as a prevalent contaminator of residents' drinking water supplies in several Kent County communities.

- Support the adoption of practical standards to protect our water sources
- Advocate for long-term funding solutions for communities with widespread PFAS contamination to eliminate dependency on filters

Statewide Sanitary Code

Michigan is the only state without a statewide sanitary code that creates a unified construction, operation, and maintenance standard for septic systems.

- Support the adoption of a statewide sanitary code for onsite wastewater systems as long as it includes a sustainable funding mechanism for local health departments to carry out duties under the code

Identify Stable Funding for County Courts

Michigan Supreme Court decisions ruled that state law doesn't allow courts to impose costs on criminal defendants for court operations. In response, legislation was passed to extend the authority to impose costs until May 2024.

- Support extension of the statutory sunset to May 2026 to safeguard our courts from financial crisis
- Support the creation of a long-term dedicated funding source to fund trial court operations
- Advocate for enhanced funding to support staff recruitment, retention, and training, along with the expansion of facilities and treatment options for individuals within the juvenile justice system

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Provide Permanent Authorizations for Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers

Senator Stabenow introduced a bill for the permanent authorization of certified behavioral health clinics. Network 180 was chosen by the State of Michigan as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center Demonstration Model, granting federal designation to enhance community-wide access to essential behavioral health services, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

- Support legislation that would provide permanency for certified community behavioral health clinics in the Medicaid program (S. 2993)

Ensure Inmates Have Access to Healthcare Coverage

The federal Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) makes incarcerated adults and youth ineligible for federal health care coverage while awaiting trial and verdict decisions.

- Support legislation that would provide access to Medicaid benefits for all eligible detainees in local jails
- Request the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services apply for a Medicaid Section 1115 waiver allowing incarcerated individuals to receive health services at least 30 days prior to release from jail or prison

FEDERAL & STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Address Environmental Contamination Challenges

Lead

Kent County faces a troubling issue of elevated blood lead levels in children due to lead paint. Addressing this serious health risk requires prioritizing exposure prevention and mitigation education and implementing costly abatement programs to ensure the safety and development of our kids.

- Advocate for the increase of funding through federal grant programs to effectively address the high rates of community-wide lead poisoning





Secure Funding for the Grand River Greenway Trail

Kent County, in partnership with local governments, aims to create a 76-mile non-motorized trail along the Grand River, connecting the County's east border to the City of Grand Haven. However, a crucial 23-mile gap exists in the regional trail network within the river corridor. To address this, the County prioritizes constructing a trail through Plainfield, Cascade, Cannon, Ada, and Lowell Townships.

- Advocate for \$15 million in state and federal funds to close the financing gap for the Grand River Greenway Trail

Issues to Watch

- Changes to Michigan's Governmental Tort Liability Act
- Direct Care Worker Wage Increase
- Environmental Protection Agency, Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) Standards
- Freedom of Information
- Guardianship Package
- Indigent Defense Funding
- Open Meetings Act
- Early Childhood Initiatives

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