

# TML LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



June 2, 2023  
Number 22

## **Legislative Update “Wrap Up” Edition Next Week**

With the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature’s regular session concluding earlier this week, the efforts of League staff are now focused on summarizing the city-related legislation that has passed. Additional detail about that legislation will be included in future *Legislative Update* articles, and the June 9 “wrap-up” edition will contain summaries of every city-related bill that passed.

## **Governor Calls Immediate Special Session**

On Monday night, Governor Abbott [announced](#) that he will convene the first of several special sessions. The first called special session began on Monday, May 29 at 9:00 p.m.

The following items are on the governor’s call:

1. **School Property Taxes:** Legislation to cut property-tax rates solely by reducing the school district maximum compressed tax rate in order to provide lasting property-tax relief for Texas taxpayers.

2. **Border Security:** Legislation solely for the purpose of increasing or enhancing the penalties for certain criminal conduct involving the smuggling of persons or the operation of a stash house.

On Tuesday, the House and Senate passed their respective property tax relief plans. Both chambers provide relief through school district tax rate compression. In addition to tax rate compression, [1S.B.1](#) (Bettencourt) and [1S.J.R.1](#) (Bettencourt) allow for a \$100,000 homestead exemption by a school district. The House ruled that 1S.B.1 is not germane to the governor's call and did not refer the bill to a committee. The House adjourned *sine die* after passage of its property tax relief plans, [1H.B. 1](#) (Meyer) and [1H.J.R. 1](#) (Meyer), and border security legislation, [1H.B. 2](#) (Guillen). The Senate is set to reconvene on Friday, June 2 at 10:00 a.m.

The League will keep the membership updated as the special session(s) continue.

## **SLFRF Funds Not Impacted by Debt Ceiling Deal**

This week, Congress passed the [Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023](#), legislation that raises the debt ceiling. The Act includes 81 rescission provisions rescinding funds from six COVID-era bills passed between 2020-2022. The State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) were not rescinded. The funds distributed to cities remain the cities' funds whether or not they have been obligated yet.

The National League of Cities recently published an [article](#) keeping cities updated on the matter.

## **Deadline for Broadband Development Office Service Level Surveys Is June 16**

The Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO) is in the process of developing the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan for achieving reliable and affordable broadband, device access, digital skills training, and cybersecurity awareness to expand digital opportunities for all Texans.

The BDO wants to hear from cities and their residents. To help facilitate such communication, the BDO has created two surveys: the [Digital Resources Mapping Tool Survey](#) (DRMT) and the [Digital Opportunity Public Survey](#) (DOPS).

The DRMT seeks information from cities about local broadband programs and services. The DRMT will take about 10 minutes to complete.

The DOPS seeks information from individual households about their experience with broadband internet accessibility, affordability, and adoption. The survey includes an optional speed test and is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. It is also audio-enabled to ensure that people with limited literacy, limited English proficiency, or visual impairments can access the

survey questions and answers. The DOPS will take about 10 minutes to complete. Participants can email their surveys to: [plan4broadband@cpa.texas.gov](mailto:plan4broadband@cpa.texas.gov) or mail them to the BDO at:

Texas Comptroller's Broadband Development Office  
P.O. Box 13528  
Austin, TX 13528

The BDO has also created the [Texas Digital Opportunity Public Survey Partner Toolkit](#) to help cities engage their residents and disseminate the DOPS. The toolkit includes the survey and provides public outreach suggestions and draft communication templates.

You can find more information about the BDO and the state's broadband efforts [here](#).

All surveys must be submitted by **June 16, 2023**.

## **Federal Infrastructure Bill Update**

*In November 2021, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law. The IIJA is altogether a \$1.2 trillion bill that will invest in the nation's core infrastructure priorities including roads, bridges, rail, transit, airports, ports, energy transmission, water systems, and broadband.*

*The League will monitor state and federal agencies and work with the National League of Cities (NLC) to access the latest information relating to the IIJA. We will provide periodic updates in the Legislative Update on resources for Texas cities on how to access IIJA funding for local infrastructure projects.*

### **U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)**

The DOE has extended the deadline to submit Pre-Award Information sheet for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program to **July 31, 2023**. The EECBG Program provides direct grants to state, tribal, and local governments to fund community-based clean energy projects through various capacity-building, planning, and infrastructure efforts to reduce carbon emissions and energy use. Local governments can apply for EECBG grants through January 2024.

The EECBG pre-award information sheet can be found [here](#). Applicants can submit the Pre-Award Information Sheet by emailing [eecbg@hq.doe.gov](mailto:eecbg@hq.doe.gov).

You can find more information about the EECBG program [here](#).

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