



92% Of Local Tax, Bonding Issues Pass In Primary

8/7/24

Local governments in 83 counties across the state saw nearly \$1.3 billion of the more than \$1.65 billion in property tax and bonding issues on local ballots approved by voters during the August primary. In all, 92 percent of the 1,010 money-related local proposals passed.

[A list of the winners and losers](#) of the more than 1,000 local ballot proposals from the August primary election is now available for our subscribers.

Of the 519 millage renewals, 97 percent passed. The largest was more than \$27.5 million for the Kent District Library. Of the 257 Headley Amendment restorations, 95 percent passed, with the largest being more than \$14.6 million to restore a public transportation millage in Genesee County. Of the 169 millage increases, 87 percent passed with the biggest coming from a more than \$12.4 million road millage in Saginaw County.

Of the 242 total local road ballot issues, only 19 (7 percent) failed. Of those, six were renewals, three restorations and 10 increases.

“Michigan residents made it clear that better roads are a priority for their communities,” County Road Association of Michigan CEO Denise **DONOHUE** said.

“Especially at this time – with less gas being sold over the last 25 years due to vehicle fuel efficiency – county road agencies appreciate voters showing their support for roads at the ballot box,” Donohue said.

The highest number of millages up for votes were for fire departments and the departments saw resounding success with a two percent failure rate.

Three fire-related increases failed. They included a millage renewal in Bridgeton Township, Schoolcraft, and a fire and ambulance bond for \$10,220,000 in Gerrish Township out of Roscommon County.

The lowest passage rate for the night came from bonds, with 56 percent passing. However, the two largest bonds, at \$180 million for the Traverse City Area Public Schools and \$150 million for Avondale School District in Oakland County, passed.

The next lowest passage category was sinking funds, which had a 61 percent passage rate.

Most of the bond and sinking fund failures came from schools, which had the highest failure rate of that night with 26 percent of all school ballot tax proposals failing. All the failures came under bonds, sinking funds, Headlee Amendment restorations and millage increases. All the school millage renewals passed.

Libraries, which have been on the frontlines of the culture war, made out well with a four percent failure rate. The failures came from rural areas and a \$6.55 million bonding issue for the Eaton Rapids Area District Library.

Montcalm County rejected the most millages, with one road and five schools being turned down for a sinking fund and Headlee Restorations.

Allegan, Roscommon, and Newaygo counties were close behind with five failed millages.

Allegan County failed a public safety increase, and three road increases and a renewal. Newaygo County failed a school bond, two renewals for a fire department and library, an increase for blight elimination, and restoration of a civic center.

Roscommon County failed a 4-H renewal, an increase for capital improvements, a fire and ambulance bond, and two restorations in Denton Township for general operations and roads.

Some of the unique millages also saw benefits from the 2024 August Primary election with two requests for a millage decrease passing.

Almena Township in Van Buren County saw its road millage hit with a Headlee Amendment.

The township decided to lower it further, but to also use the savings to increase its fire department budget. The fire department increase passed. Besides the Van Buren County decrease, there was one in Shiawassee County where Rush Township separated the ambulance budget from the fire department budget.

A Meals-On-Wheels program in Iron County passed, along with a zoo millage renewal in Saginaw County.

There were several tax separations and 911 surcharges that were up for a vote as well, with the surcharges setting a \$3 fee on monthly bills for all phones in the county to pay for dispatch.

Kent County will see a two percent increase to the county's hospitality tax after the passage of a ballot proposal that required approval by the Michigan Legislature.

The Rep. [John FITZGERALD \(D-Wyoming\)](#)-backed bill, signed by Gov. [Gretchen WHITMER](#), let residents vote on the hotel tax that would be used to build an amphitheater and a soccer stadium in Grand Rapids (See "[Whitmer Touts Kent County Hotel Tax Bill In Grand Rapids](#)," 4/15/24).

Speaker Township in Sanilac County passed a temporary moratorium on the building of wind and solar power facilities in the township. The issue has been at the forefront of a fight over land use for different renewable energy facilities (See [“Bill Axing MPSC Wind, Solar Siting Drops Week After Ballot Effort Misses Deadline,”](#) 6/6/24).

The city of Whitefish in Chippewa County passed a zoning ordinance to regulate short-term rentals, animals, and mineral mining in the area. The short-term rentals have been a contentious issue for some locals in tourist areas where housing has been tight (See [“Are Short-Term Rentals Impacting Tight Housing Market?”](#) 10/6/23).

The cannabis industry also gained a township during the vote last night with Seville Township in Gratiot County passing an opt-in for a processor, transporter, two growers, and a compliance facility. There were no retailers in the proposition.