

**2025-2026**

# Legislative Policy Platform

SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, represents all levels of local government in Southeast Michigan – counties, cities, villages, townships, intermediate school districts, and community colleges. With 4.8 million residents, the SEMCOG region is home to more than half the State's economic activity and nearly half its residents.

SEMCOG convenes local governments to set a regional course for high-quality public infrastructure, a skilled workforce, a healthy natural environment, and an enhanced quality of life. SEMCOG connects legislators with local leaders as a resource for perspective, context, and expertise when developing policy. The following policy recommendations – comprised of consensus positions from Southeast Michigan leaders and staff – reflect necessary changes to State and federal laws, regulations, rules, and appropriations, as well as international policy and regulation. Enacting these policies is key to Southeast Michigan's health and economic prosperity. Like all SEMCOG's work, these recommendations are grounded in the balancing of sound data with the needs of all who live in our region.

This platform includes references to SEMCOG data and planning documents, which illustrate the need to adopt these policies and build a foundation of knowledge on the important issues facing Southeast Michigan. While policy positions and their implications overlap across topics, this Legislative Platform is organized into the following five categories below:





# Infrastructure



I-75 over 14 Mile Road, City of Madison Heights

Southeast Michigan's prosperity depends on modern and well-maintained infrastructure. Our means of transportation are evolving, and our dependence on communications technology is expanding exponentially. There is a critical need to continue safe and affordable water delivery to residents while minimizing threats to homes and businesses from extreme weather events and flooding.

Funding and management of vital shared infrastructure assets are coordinated at the regional level, while local infrastructure management is foundational to shared prosperity and economic development.

## Managing Regional Assets

- Support funding for public infrastructure projects, using asset management principles to better integrate investments across transportation, water, underground, and private utility infrastructure.
- To facilitate strategic and efficient investments, support funding and integration for infrastructure data collection, assessment, planning, and overall strategic coordination for communities and regions.
- Direct funding resources to the regional and community level where local leaders have expertise (e.g., Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program).
- To achieve sustainable and adequate investments in assessing, maintaining, and modernizing aging infrastructure, support additional formula-based resources from State and federal partners.
- Address regional and local needs by supporting flexibility in the use of State and federal infrastructure funds, and ensure that local infrastructure investments are balanced with State and federal needs.
- Respect the responsibility of local governments to manage use of the public right-of-way and utility easements. Oppose proposals that would require local governments to pay for the relocation costs of private utility facilities within the public road easement area.
- Provide resources to support regional planning (e.g., transportation/mobility, broadband, parks and recreation, water resources/stormwater) and the coordination of infrastructure projects.

## Managing Regional Assets (continued)

- Support energy policies (such as EV charging infrastructure and grid modernization) that balance reliable and affordable energy with environmental benefits of renewable, clean and sustainable energy options.
- Enable regions to be eligible recipients of infrastructure funding in instances where a regional approach is more effective, efficient, and reflects community support.
- Ensure adequate funding for federally designated program implementation as well as statewide regional planning activities including Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), water/air quality, and Economic Development District designations.
- Ensure that funding and programs align with long-established statewide regional planning boundaries, and support coordination of regional activities across Michigan.
- Support emerging technologies for innovation, leveraging these advances while protecting local needs and priorities.
- Support the Great Lakes Compact and prevent diversions of Great Lakes water.

## Transforming Transportation

- Support the long-term enhancement and diversification of funding sources for the transportation system.
- Support the equitable allocation of State and federal transportation funds, including evaluation of existing funding (e.g., Act 51, surface transportation reauthorization).
- Advocate for Michigan to receive an equitable share of federal discretionary transportation grants.
- Support for secure and efficient international border crossings within the region.
- Support all forms of transportation and associated programs, including ADA-compliant and universally accessible walkable communities and complete streets to meet local needs.
- Support transit policies that promote systems that are safe, efficient, effective, reliable, and meet our regional and local needs.
- Support efforts based on regional data and technical expertise to improve transportation safety and ensure that the most vulnerable users of the transportation network are protected.
- Ensure coordinated and standardized deployment and modernization of infrastructure (e.g., school crossings).
- Enforce and reevaluate current truck weight limits, overweight load permitting fees, and criteria; ensure that revenues are directed to improving the safety and integrity of the State's roads and bridges.
- Support State and federal investment in ports and encourage coordination to directly invest in facilities and encourage maritime-related economic development and environmental sustainability.
- Ensure resiliency planning and implementation is incorporated into programs and funding.



# Infrastructure

## Modernizing Water Systems

- Enable local governments to fund stormwater system construction, improvements, and operations using a fee-based mechanism – minimizing the threat of litigation for local governments.
- Support increased resources and broadened eligibility across all types of water infrastructure based on regional and local priorities through low- to zero-match grant and loan programs.
- Support increased State funding for the ongoing replacement of lead service lines on public and private property while also continuing to pursue legislation that supports replacement as part of asset management planning and infrastructure coordination.
- Strengthen provisions to eliminate liability for damages from rain events that exceed system design standards.
- Support development of a statewide sanitary code and resources for implementation to address sustainable onsite sewage disposal system standards (including private septic systems) and reflect the priorities and funding needs of local health departments.
- Support source water monitoring and water/wastewater treatment funding programs to address contaminants such as PFAS, ensuring financial accountability for costs of treatment and removal.
- Support State and federal resources for water affordability programs, including creation of a statewide, sustainable, water assistance fund with stringent qualifying requirements for utilities and customers without mandating participation.
- Support funding for local resiliency planning, programs, and project implementation that reduce or eliminate long-term risks to people and property from extreme weather events.
- Support funding resources to assist homeowners with home rehabilitation costs from flooding and basement backups, as well as expanded and enhanced funding for preventative programs (e.g., elimination of CSOs, SSOs, and connections of structures to sewer and stormwater systems) to reduce property damage caused by future flooding and extreme weather events.

## Expanding Broadband Availability

- Support the full deployment of affordable high-speed broadband, especially in rural and underserved areas, while ensuring coordination with local community plans when developing or expanding private networks.
- Incentivize Internet Service Providers to work with local governments on broadband deployment and accessibility projects.



Explore SEMCOG Infrastructure Resources





# Communities

Local governments and educational institutions in Southeast Michigan need strong State and federal partners to ensure a well-trained public sector workforce, provide access to adequate and flexible funding, and respect the priorities of locally elected officials. Deferred local infrastructure investment and reduced services hinder our capacity to build stronger communities.

## Local Government Finance

- Support local options for more diverse and sustainable sources of local government revenue to reduce reliance on property taxes.
- Resolve constitutional problems associated with property taxes, including the permanent loss of ongoing revenue from the Great Recession and needless Headlee rollbacks.
- Ensure that State and federal funding programs provide flexibility to meet the unique needs of communities.
- Require the State of Michigan to return the same proportion of its revenues to local governments as it did when Proposal A revenue was fully realized, in keeping with the intent of Article IX Sec. 30 of the Michigan Constitution.
- Reimburse local governments for lost revenues associated with State changes to tax laws.
- Support a wide range of tools that enhance economic development efforts, but not at the expense of local governments.
- Protect and increase statutory revenue sharing funding levels and establish a permanent revenue sharing trust fund.
- Provide financial incentives to encourage voluntary local government and school district collaboration or consolidation.



# Communities

## Local Government Finance (continued)

- Provide additional resources and training in the assessment of commercial and industrial properties.
- Restore advanced refunding for tax-exempt municipal bonds.
- Support protections against unfunded mandates that go beyond those currently found in the State Constitution.
- Enact new provisions in property tax foreclosure law to reflect new realities created by recent court decisions.
- Support State and federal policies that provide resources to communities dealing with environmentally based health issues such as PFAS and lead in water, as well as air quality, especially in areas where the population has fewer financial resources to remedy the problem.
- Provide resources for local governments to assist with pension funding and other post-employment benefit (OPEB) challenges.
- Support policies to prevent property tax foreclosure, including disclosure of tax assessment increases for prospective residential homebuyers.
- Provide resources for the proactive modernization or replacement of aging municipal and education buildings and facilities.
- Ensure that local governments and education institutions revenues keep pace with increasing wages and benefits to support a robust public sector workforce.

## Local Government Operations

- Support policies and programs to facilitate aging in place, including Medicare coverage of tele-health and Medicaid waivers for in-home services, to accommodate the significant growth forecast in the number of individuals over the age of 65.
- Protect local control, guarding against State mandates on local fiscal/operational issues, zoning/land use, and all issues where the needs of communities are best served by locally-elected governing boards.
- Protect against the erosion of governmental immunity and expand these protections in areas that conflict with local government operations.
- Repeal the State fireworks law, which limits local government control.
- Ensure that funding and resources are available to conduct federal data collection and analysis, including the Decennial Census and American Community Survey, to provide essential demographic and economic data for the public, businesses, and communities, and to secure the ability of the Census Bureau to meet its constitutional mandate.

## Local Government Operations (continued)

- Support the Census Bureau's mission to produce full, fair, complete, and accurate data by maintaining and improving the necessary response rates to all Census Bureau surveys by conducting the needed number of contacts to respondents.
- Evaluate and minimize the negative impacts of statistical methods, such as 'differential privacy,' on census data consistency and accuracy while protecting confidentiality.
- Support greater resources for physical and mental health care programs, including substance use disorders, for the under-served population within our region to facilitate greater economic vitality.
- Support policies and resources to attract and train public sector employees (such as public safety staff and water system operators) to address workforce shortages.
- Provide resources, training, and support for election officials and workers to ensure the continued integrity of elections.
- Provide funding and assistance for cybersecurity efforts to protect communities, school districts, education institutions, and water authorities.



Explore SEMCOG Communities Resources





# Economy and Workforce

Where we work and how we learn – along with the challenges of an aging workforce and barriers to employment – are essential considerations for Southeast Michigan’s evolving economy. We know that future-proofing students by preparing them for a rapidly changing economy through education, training, and experiential learning will ensure success in the workplace. Meanwhile, economic development needs to include a focus on placemaking and community investment that benefits residents, workers, and businesses of all sizes.

## Economic Development

- Support Southeast Michigan’s priority industry clusters, including efforts to make Michigan the leader in implementing the next generation of mobility.
- Support community and economic development incentives that attract a diversity of business investment, create quality places, and strengthen communities while including safeguards to ensure community benefits of development are realized.
- Foster innovation and entrepreneurship to create a startup-friendly environment by enhancing access to informational, financial, cultural, and technology resources.
- Recognize placemaking as an economic driver by providing resources through federal and state programs and initiatives, reflecting the diversity and unique circumstances of our communities.
- Encourage federal investment, procurement and training for defense, human services, homeland security, and other services/programs within Southeast Michigan.
- Support local priorities and regional strategies to ensure availability of a variety of housing options to meet community needs, attract workers, and create stable and vibrant neighborhoods.

## Workforce

- Increase eligibility and access to affordable and marketable skills training; ease requirements for the transfer of skills/certification for adults re-entering the workforce – especially military personnel, returning citizens, and persons with disabilities.
- Address workforce participation challenges through initiatives (e.g., development of more robust child and elder-care systems) to remove barriers to employment.
- Support policies that facilitate legal immigration to support economic development and help meet the region's workforce needs.
- Increase formula-based funding for wraparound services delivered through the public workforce system, such as transportation and childcare, for adults seeking to participate in the workforce.
- Support initiatives that grow the skilled workforce in Southeast Michigan, including upskilling, reskilling, and retraining.
- Invest in internship, mentoring, apprenticeship, and career exposure programs in high-demand occupations to ensure students are informed about career options.
- Ensure that high school graduates are able to access a variety of post-secondary educational training options, including four-year, two-year, certificate, and apprenticeship programs to help prepare for career success.
- Promote post-secondary education and lifelong learning to support long-term career success and opportunities in an evolving economy.
- Support efforts to balance economic needs of workers with public and private employer costs, protect jobs, sustain service quality, and promote economic growth.
- Support policies that maximize the use of local workforce development boards (e.g., Michigan Works!) to deliver publicly funded workforce development programs and services.

## Education

- Stabilize funding for school districts by continuing to adjust for declining school populations.
- Support programs that make post-secondary education affordable, including resources for non-traditional and part-time students maintaining employment.
- Require all publicly funded schools to follow the same regulations and requirements for accountability and transparency.
- Ensure that Michigan's K-12 school funding system adequately reflects the additional costs of educating students, such as those with special needs; those with counseling and mental health needs; those who are at-risk; or multi-lingual learners.
- Ensure that every child has equal access to educational materials and technology – including adequate high-speed broadband service – inside the classroom and where they reside, to enable students to achieve their highest potential.
- Provide high-quality instruction for every student through enhanced professional development opportunities for educators.



# Economy and Workforce

## Education (continued)

- Develop a robust educator pipeline through fair compensation, promoting recruitment and retention, and alternative pathways.
- Provide incentives for collaboration among K-12, community colleges, and universities.
- Ensure every child has access to high-quality early childhood programs.
- Ensure that School-Aid Fund expenditures for Pre-K through 12 are not diverted to post-secondary institutions, while supporting a dedicated funding source for post-secondary institutions.
- Support efforts for establishing broader transfer and articulation agreements to provide students with credit for previous formal education.
- Expand and strengthen the career guidance system (such as increasing the availability of career counselors and career navigators) to promote technical education and career pathways at secondary and post-secondary levels.
- Promote and fund programs focused on the development of workplace skills and personal behaviors that foster long-term employment success.
- Support child nutrition funding to allow for no-cost school meals for all K-12 students.
- Protect the constitutional prohibition on State funding for vouchers, education savings accounts, and private school funding.
- Encourage programs that adopt innovative strategies and provide professional support to engage parents and guardians of affected students to address the continuing challenges of chronic absenteeism.
- Ensure K-12 health education highlights the impacts of marijuana, vaping, and smoking on the long-term health of students.



Explore SEMCOG Economy and Workforce Resources





# Natural Assets

SEMCOG strives for a brighter future by growing our resilience, equity, and economy with nature (GREEN). Preserving and improving our natural assets – priceless features of Southeast Michigan that have largely defined our past and present – is critical. Bountiful fresh water is the foundation of much of our economy and the cornerstone for a wide range of recreational activities. Clean air is essential to the health and welfare of our residents. Guarding homes, businesses, and infrastructure against extreme weather and flooding is imperative. Managing State and interstate waste streams is critical to the health and safety of the region.

- Ensure that State and federal regulations reflect robust scientific evidence and research, balancing environmental needs and priorities with economic sustainability.
- Support locally developed, cost-effective strategies to attain and maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- Support investments and programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and decrease long-term energy costs.
- Support efforts and funding to encourage habitat restoration, invasive species management, and stormwater mitigation.
- Minimize activities and support legislation to address the negative impacts on air and water quality for protection of public health and natural assets.
- Ensure that efforts to manage pollutants and nutrients in the Great Lakes – through programs such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) MS4 permitting – are focused on their primary sources and are not overly burdensome to local governments.
- Support the streamlining of environmental permitting and review processes, and adequately staff governmental regulatory agencies to ensure timely review and approvals.



## Natural Assets

- Support materials management planning initiatives that reduce waste streams to disposal sites and enhance recycling, without creating unfunded mandates on local governments and planning regions.
- Invest intentionally with additional funding and strategically aligned resources to meet the region's green infrastructure needs.
- Support increased State and federal investment in programs for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation, and programming of local parks close to the Michigan's major population centers.
- Protect local governments and private property owners by requiring polluting parties to shoulder the burden of any associated clean-up, including pre-treatment of emerging pollutants in waste streams discharged to public wastewater systems.
- Provide resources to address flooding and basement backups by reducing stormwater runoff in combined and separated service areas.
- Support funding programs and initiatives for large-scale climate resiliency projects to address flooding.
- Utilize nature-based solutions to effectively manage stormwater flooding, while also supporting climate resilience, environmental quality, social equity, and economic vitality.
- Seek opportunities to limit/eliminate out-of-state waste, including increasing fees for disposal of waste.
- Support the continued research into carbon capture and storage technologies, investment opportunities and the regulatory framework that protects environmental and public health.



Explore SEMCOG Natural Assets Resources





## Advocacy

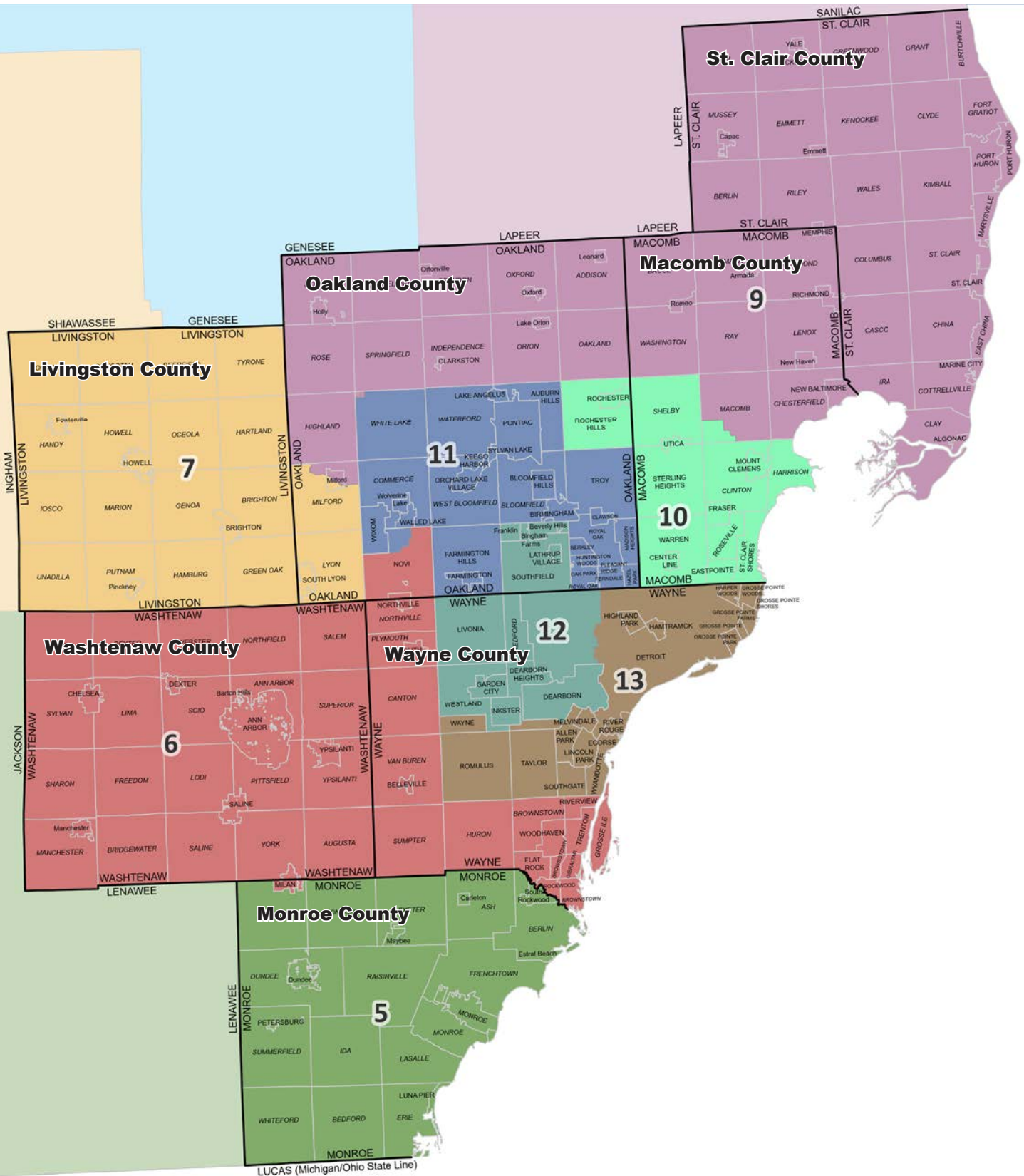


Advancing SEMCOG's bipartisan legislative priorities depends on the active support of SEMCOG members, partners, and coalitions across the region, state, and nation. Strengthening and expanding our relationships with federal and State legislators and regulators is vital to championing the interests of our communities, Southeast Michigan, and the State of Michigan. SEMCOG offers this Legislative Policy Platform to empower community leaders, along with our staff experts, to effectively engage with representatives in Lansing and Washington.

Explore SEMCOG Advocacy Resources



# U.S. Congressional Districts





## **U.S. Senators**

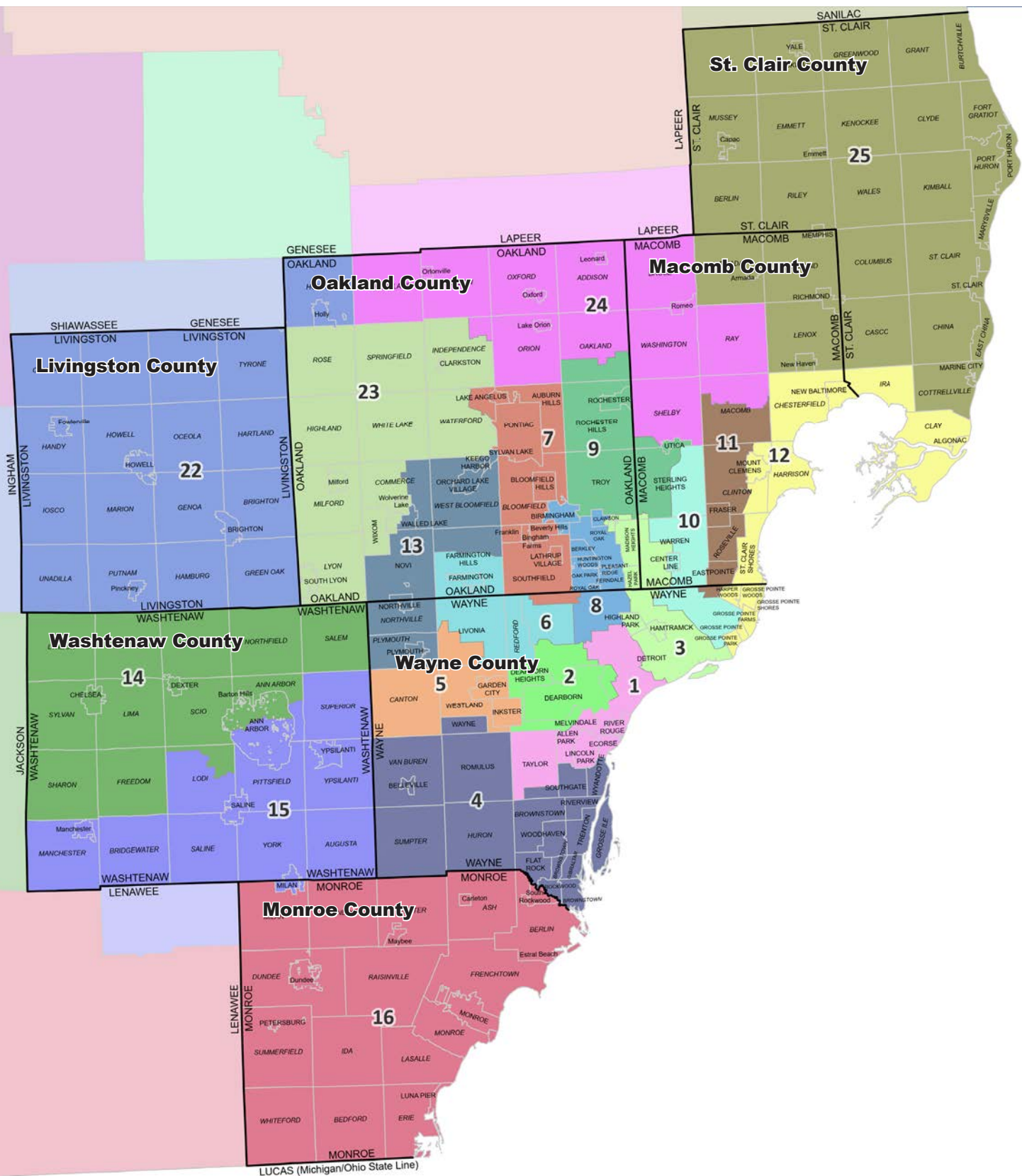
**Gary Peters (D)**

**Elissa Slotkin (D)**

## **U.S. Representatives**

- 5. Tim Walberg (R)**
- 6. Debbie Dingell (D)**
- 7. Tom Barrett (R)**
- 9. Lisa McClain (R)**
- 10. John James (R)**
- 11. Haley Stevens (D)**
- 12. Rashida Tlaib (D)**
- 13. Shri Thanedar (D)**

# Michigan Senate Districts

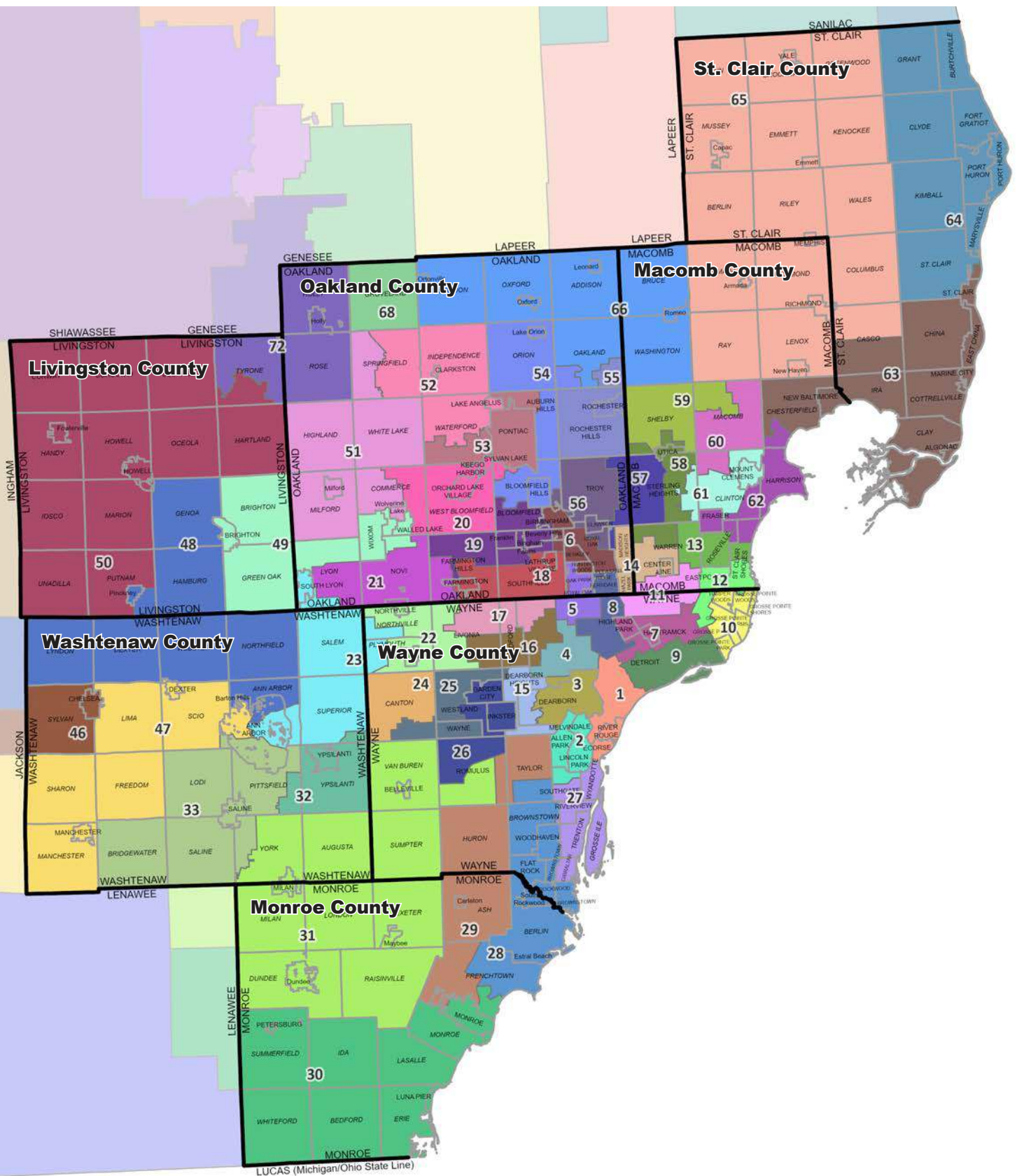


A photograph of the Michigan State Capitol building, a large, ornate, light-colored stone structure with a prominent dome topped by a golden spire. The building is surrounded by a green lawn and flower beds. In the foreground, there is a statue on a pedestal. The sky is blue with some clouds. A dark blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text for the Michigan State Senators.

## Michigan State Senators

1. Erika Geiss (D)
2. Sylvia Santana (D)
3. Stephanie Chang (D)
4. Darrin Camilleri (D)
5. Dayna Polehanki (D)
6. Mary Cavanaugh (D)
7. Jeremy Moss (D)
8. Mallory McMorrow (D)
9. Michael Webber (R)
10. Paul Wojno (D)
11. Veronica Klinefelt (D)
12. Kevin Hertel (D)
13. Rosemary Bayer (D)
14. Sue Shink (D)
15. Jeff Irwin (D)
16. Joseph Bellino, Jr. (R)
22. Lana Theis (R)
23. Jim Runestad (R)
24. Ruth Johnson (R)
25. Dan Lauwers (R)

# Michigan House Districts



## Michigan State Representatives

- |                             |                           |                             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Tyrone Carter (D)        | 20. Noah Arbit (D)        | 51. Matt Maddock (R)        |
| 2. Tulio Liberati (D)       | 21. Kelly Breen (D)       | 52. Mike Harris (R)         |
| 3. Alabas Farhat (D)        | 22. Matt Koleszar (D)     | 53. Brenda Carter (D)       |
| 4. Karen Whitsett (D)       | 23. Jason Morgan (D)      | 54. Donni Steele (R)        |
| 5. Regina Weiss (D)         | 24. Ranjeev Puri (D)      | 55. Mark Tisdell (R)        |
| 6. Natalie Price (D)        | 25. Peter Herzberg (D)    | 56. Sharon MacDonell (D)    |
| 7. Tonya Myers Phillips (D) | 26. Dylan Wegela (D)      | 57. Thomas Kuhn (R)         |
| 8. Helena Scott (D)         | 27. Rylee Linting (R)     | 58. Ron Robinson (R)        |
| 9. Joe Tate (D)             | 28. Jamie Thompson (R)    | 59. Douglas Wozniak (R)     |
| 10. Veronica Paiz (D)       | 29. James DeSana (R)      | 60. Joseph Aragona (R)      |
| 11. Donavan McKinney (D)    | 30. William Bruck (R)     | 61. Denise Mentzer (D)      |
| 12. Kimberly Edwards (D)    | 31. Reggie Miller (D)     | 62. Alicia St. Germaine (R) |
| 13. Mai Xiong (D)           | 32. Jimmie Wilson Jr. (D) | 63. Jay DeBoyer (R)         |
| 14. Mike McFall (D)         | 33. Morgan Foreman (D)    | 64. Joseph Pavlov (R)       |
| 15. Erin Byrnes (D)         | 46. Kathy Schmaltz (R)    | 65. Jaime Greene (R)        |
| 16. Stephanie Young (D)     | 47. Carrie Rheingans (D)  | 66. Josh Schriver (R)       |
| 17. Laurie Pohutsky (D)     | 48. Jennifer Conlin (D)   | 68. Phil Green (R)          |
| 18. Jason Hoskins (D)       | 49. Ann Bollin (R)        | 72. Mike Mueller (R)        |
| 19. Samantha Steckloff (D)  | 50. Jason Woolford (R)    |                             |



## Contact Us

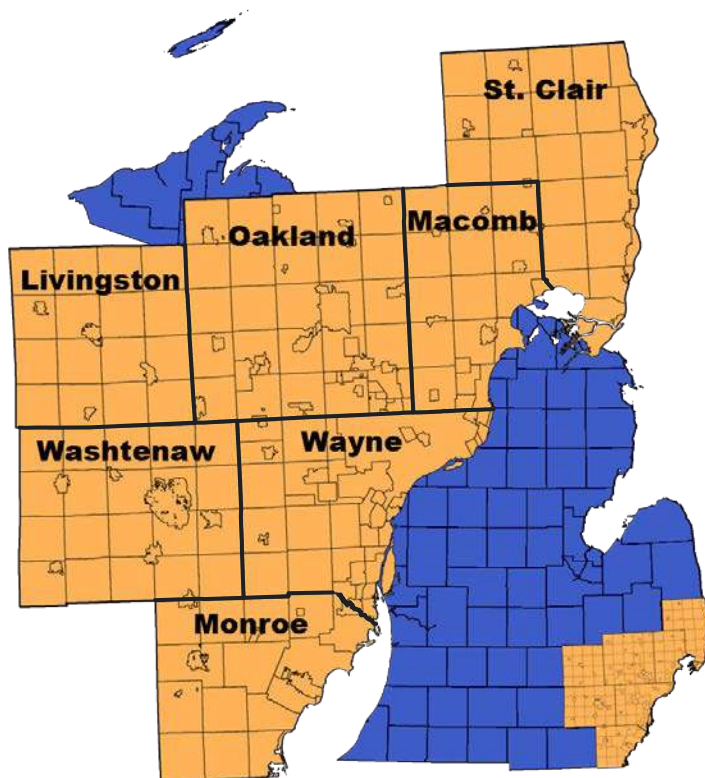
Call to learn more about how we can help. You can also visit the Legislation section of our website at [semcog.org/legislation](http://semcog.org/legislation).

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### SEMCOG Vision

All people in Southeast Michigan benefit from a connected, thriving region of small towns, dynamic urban centers, active waterfronts, diverse neighborhoods, premier educational institutions, and abundant agricultural, recreational, and natural areas.

### SEMCOG

**Southeast Michigan Council of Governments**

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