

July 31, 2025

Governor Whitmer wants increased oversight and transparency over legislative enhancement grants, otherwise known as earmarks, to tackle waste, fraud, and abuse. This proposal builds on the governor's proposal to increase transparency over legislative enhancement grants in her 2025 State of the State. The proposal calls for additional oversight and transparency measures within the nonpartisan Office of Auditor General.

The new proposal calls for:

- The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to play a more active, formal role in oversight of grants once approved, ensuring funds are spent by departments on projects in accordance with their purpose and state law.
- Cutting down on wasteful spending and ensuring more efficient and reasonable management of taxpayer dollars by state departments, the OAG, and the legislature. This would be achieved by capping the amount dedicated to legislative earmarks in each budget.
- Requiring legislators to submit, for public record, a "sponsorship letter" on official letterhead with the following information:
 - the name of the legislator,
 - the name of the grant recipient,
 - the dollar value of the grant,
 - its clearly stated public purpose,
 - and a signed pledge that there exists no immediate conflict of interest for the legislator.
- Requiring all grant information, including legislative sponsors, to be posted online for public review at least five days before passage of the budget.
- A ban on earmarks to for-profit entities, ending the flow of taxpayer money to private developers and companies.
- Require all earmarks to be approved by the relevant appropriations subcommittees during public hearings because earmarks are too often slipped into the budget at the last minute.

Excerpt from [Michigan Information & Research Service Inc.:](#)

Gov Wants Auditor General Oversight On Earmarks

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Gov. Gretchen WHITMER is looking to implement an annual ceiling for legislative earmarks and tap the Office of Auditor General (OAG) to make sure the money is spent appropriately.

Whitmer's office didn't give a specific dollar cap for the annual budget earmarks, which are typically added late in the process, but the move for more oversight comes amid

heightened Attorney General and media scrutiny about specific grants, like those given to Fey BEYDOUN, David COKER and the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association.

“Wasteful spending, fraud, and abuse have no place in Lansing. For too long, bad actors have been able to manipulate the system for personal gain. As a former prosecutor, Governor Whitmer believes that anyone who receives taxpayer dollars must follow the law and use those resources appropriately. That’s why she would support additional efforts, beyond what she outlined in her State of the State, to make our budget process more open and transparent, tackle waste, fraud, and abuse head on, and end the trend of 11th hour additions,” said Bobby LEDDY, communications director for Whitmer.

Last term, Senate Democrats were the first to address the issue by creating a process in which the legislative sponsors of earmarks were disclosed after the budget was adopted.

During her State of the State, Whitmer called for legislative earmarks to be posted online for public review at least five days before a budget is passed. She said no for-profits should get an earmark and that each spending request gets at least one sign-off from a legislative subcommittee.

“If they can do it in D.C., we sure as hell can too,” Whitmer said during the address.