



Montgomery County Emergency Management Agency

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February 23, 2026

Iowa Emergency Management Commissions are regional, multi-jurisdictional governing bodies established under state law — not county departments. Each commission includes a representative of the Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff, and the Mayor of every city within the county. By statute, the Commission is the fiscal authority for local emergency management, and its Chair or Vice-Chair serves as the certifying official for the Commission's budget.

Iowa Code 29C.17 and Iowa Code 331.424(1) expressly authorize use of the general supplemental levy as a countywide funding source because emergency management protects all people and property across the county. The authority flows directly from the Legislature to the Commission. It is a functional countywide special levy used for emergency management — not a county-government departmental levy. When a Commission selects this funding mechanism, the Board's role is parliamentary, as affirmed in multiple Iowa Attorney General opinions.

Local governments do not possess authority to veto the lawful budgets of independent political subdivisions. Allowing a unilateral Board veto over a Commission budget would effectively permit one member of a multi-jurisdictional body to override cities and the Sheriff after a public vote.

The Governor's Department of Government Efficiency has called for shared services, regional collaboration, and modernized local government structures that reduce duplication and property tax pressure. Local emergency management commissions already embody that model — cities, the county, and the Sheriff jointly plan, train, budget, and respond together.

Granting unilateral veto authority would undermine public trust, politicize emergency preparedness, and fracture decades of regional cooperation. If regional structures weaken, cities could be forced to establish independent emergency management offices, increasing costs, duplicating services, reducing efficiency, and harming interoperability among responders.

This precedent could extend beyond emergency management to other regional entities — landfill commissions, watershed authorities, joint fire districts, transit authorities, and 911 service boards — moving Iowa away from the collaborative governance model the Legislature has consistently encouraged.