



Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission

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TO: Senators Oelslager, Manning, Skindell
Representatives Smith, Ryan, Cera

FROM: William Murdock, Executive Director
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

DATE: June 27, 2017

SUBJECT: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Letter of Interest to the
State Budget Conference Committee

We view this operating budget as an opportunity to collaborate with the state and also express our concerns. We hope to find solutions for our region and ensure all of Ohio's local governments have the necessary tools to thrive.

As the regional council for Central Ohio, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission is a voluntary association of over 60 political subdivisions and regional organizations in our region. As the conference committee convenes to review and deliberate over the 2018-2019 biennium budget, we hope you consider these issues that reflect our region's collective voice and following line items that will help local governments thrive in the years to come.

Data Sharing: *(Comp. Doc. Line Item: LIBCD7; Recommended disposition: Adopt House Language).*

Data allows communities to identify strengths and weaknesses in their business practices, open paths to new opportunities, and benchmark themselves against best practices. Therefore we were disappointed to hear of the removal of the DataOhio Board and an accompanying local government information exchange grant program from the budget in the Senate's substitute version of the budget legislation. We support the DataOhio language to be added during conference committee.

(Comp. Doc. Line Item: DASCD28; Recommended disposition: Keep Executive Language).

MORPC also supports a provision in the budget that utilizes advanced data analytics by requiring all state agencies, boards, and commissions to share the data they now store in more than 1,600 separate databases.

Public Library Funding: *(Comp. Doc. Line Item: RDFCD8; Recommended disposition: Adopt Senate Language).*

We commend members of the Senate for adding language that would require the director of Budget and Management to credit 1.68% of the total revenue credited to the General Revenue Fund (GRF) to the Public Library Fund in each month of fiscal year 2018 and 2019. This will ensure that members of our region will continue to have access to the breadth of educational resources, job search assistance, and workforce development support provided by our state's public libraries.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Matt Greeson
Chair

Rory McGuinness
Vice Chair

Karen J. Angelou
Secretary

Weatherization Funding: *(Comp. Doc. Line Item: DEVCD35; Recommended disposition: Adopt House Language)*

MORPC provides free weatherization services to eligible Franklin County residents. Energy savings can translate into income that can be put toward other needs such as food, health care, or transportation. To be eligible, one must rent or own a home and have a total household income equal to or less than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

In Central Ohio for nearly 30 years, MORPC has been able to leverage utility funding with public investments to service more than 15,000 households, which is making homes safer, more energy efficient and comfortable for families throughout the year. These benefits are provided in part due to federal funding from the Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) administered through the Ohio Development Services Agency.

Therefore, MORPC supports language that increases the available federal funding available to the Ohio HWAP, specifically requesting the annual transfer of LIHEAP funding (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or "HEAP") to be maxed out at 25% (from 15%) allowable under the program requirements. Based on the previous year's amount of HEAP funding and transfer, this would result in an increase in funding for HWAP of about fourteen million dollars.

Transit Funding:

This proposed operating budget, as is, would significantly reduce sales tax revenue for Ohio counties and regional transit authorities. This revenue loss is a result of the sunset of sales taxes on Medicaid managed care organizations (MCO). The current budget language simply allows this source of revenue to expire, depriving Ohio counties and regional transit authorities of over \$200 million annually. The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA), a MORPC member, would lose \$9 million annually.

In a region that could add up to one million people and 300,000 jobs by 2050, it is essential that we continue to invest in our transit system. We support finding a long-term solution to a major impending revenue loss for Ohio's local transit agencies and counties.

Removal of Centralized Collection:

As an association of local governments, MORPC was pleased with the adopted House amendment that removed the centralized collection of municipal income tax on net profits in the budget. Moving to a centralized collection process would have been a significant shift and an extraordinarily complicated transition.

Throwback Rule:

We oppose the elimination of the throwback rule. Central Ohio is a major logistics and distribution hub, and our member municipalities rely on revenue generated through the uniformly applied throwback rule, one component of the three-factor formula for determining sales that originate from mainly warehouse, distribution, or fulfillment centers. We ask that any proposal to repeal the throwback rule be removed from the budget.

Local Government Fund:

We were concerned with the original version of this budget, which included a capacity-based formula for Local Government Fund (LGF) distribution, and are pleased to see its removal. Such a proposal could not effectively measure the success of our local governments and would have led to instability on the local level.

We are encouraged that this budget has more LGF funds allocated than the previous budget, however, in order to ensure a continued level of local services statewide as well as giving our region the ability to deal with pressures of growth, we strongly advocate for a larger increase to the LGF.

Thank you for your consideration of these items of concern and opportunity. We look forward to continuing our important work together.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, at 614-233-4101 or at wmurdock@morpc.org with any questions or when MORPC can be of assistance.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Murdock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

William Murdock
MORPC Executive Director