

STATE OPERATING BUDGET OVERVIEW

July 1 marked the start of the fiscal year for the state government, and Ohio's recently signed biennial operating budget (sub. HB 49) took effect. The budget bill consists of \$65 billion of allocated funds that provide the necessary financial resources for state government to function. MORPC staff played an active role throughout the budget process and utilized the 2017-2018 Public Policy Agenda to navigate the various policy issues that impact MORPC members and the region. Below were some areas of focus for the agency.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY

Centralized Collection – MORPC advocated against a proposal that would have created a centralized collection of municipal income tax on net profits. A provision allowing, but not requiring businesses to file tax returns through the Ohio Business Gateway was included in the final version of the budget.

Throwback Rule – We opposed 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. Unfortunately, the throwback rule was eliminated.

Local Government Fund – 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 advocated for an increase in funds to the LGF.

Transit and County Funding – Due to the discontinuation of sales and use tax on Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO's) counties and regional transit authorities would have been deprived of \$200 million annually. MORPC supported a legislative solution to this loss in revenue. This funding concern is ongoing.

Data Sharing – Data allows communities to identify strengths and weaknesses and open paths to new opportunities. Therefore, we supported the creation of the DataOhio Board and an accompanying local government information exchange grant program, which was included in the House version, but was removed by the Senate.

SUPPORTING MORPC PROGRAMS & REGIONAL PARTNERS

Public Library Funding – The agency supported maintaining the Public Library Fund at 1.7 percent of the state GRF. 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 public libraries.

Safe Sidewalks for Seniors – We sought an appropriation, for a Safe Sidewalks for Seniors Initiative that would have distributed funds to eligible age-friendly cities or metropolitan planning organizations serving eligible cities. The initiative would identify neighborhoods with a high population of older adults that lack basic sidewalk infrastructure. Such an investment in Central Ohio, would make the region an even better place for older adults and everyone else.

Water Quality & Quantity – MORPC places a high priority on water quality and quantity, therefore we advocated for the state to restore funding to our regional partner Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District and other SWCDs across the state. Increasing state funding to a true one-one match with localities will make it easier for SWCDs to make a positive impact on our water resources.

Weatherization Funding – For nearly 30 years, MORPC has leveraged utility funding with investments to service over 15,000 households. Therefore, the agency supported language that increased the available federal funding to the Ohio Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (HWAP).

TESTIMONY

MORPC Executive Director William Murdock submitted written interested party testimony to the Ohio House Finance Committee on April 26, 2017.

Murdock also submitted interested party testimony to the Ohio Senate Finance Committee on June 15, 2017.

To view testimony and other policy resources from MORPC, visit morpc.org/government-affairs.