March 27, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Re: MORPC Support of Sub. HB 197 the COVID-19 Emergency Bill

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and over 70 Central Ohio local government members we thank you for your leadership and swift action over the last several weeks to confront both the public health crisis caused by the Coronavirus and COVID-19, as well as the economic challenges associated with this unprecedented situation.

Local governments are on the frontlines of our nation’s local public health emergency response and overall public safety efforts. Now, more than ever, local, state, and federal governments must work together to address this crisis. It is in this vein that we thank you and offer our strong support of Substitute House Bill 197. We specifically thank you for the following provisions of the bill:

- **Open Meetings** – Electronic Participation. Allows members of a public body to hold and attend meetings by video conference, teleconference or other similar electronic technology under certain conditions for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic but not beyond December 1, 2020.

- **Budget Stabilization Fund Transfer** – Authorizes the Office of Budget and Management Director to transfer cash in FY 2020 from the Budget Stabilization Fund to the General Revenue Fund to balance the budget with approval of the at least two Controlling Board members from each chamber of the General Assembly.

- **Waive Penalties and Fees** – Gives the following governmental entities the ability to waive penalties and late fees owed from the issuance of outstanding loans to the Ohio Public Works Commission, the Ohio Water Development Authority and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

- **Tax Compliance Mitigation**: Authorizes the Tax Commissioner to extend the tax filing and payment deadlines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also applies to school district income
taxes, municipal income taxes administered by the state and certain fees administered by the Department of Taxation.

- **2020 Primary Election**: Allows any Ohio elector who has not already voted in the 2020 primary election the opportunity to vote by absentee ballot through 7:30 p.m. on April 28, 2020.

As local governments continue to adapt through this crisis, we stand ready to be effective partners. Again, thank you for your leadership as you guide us through this pandemic. Please never hesitate to contact me whenever MORPC can be of assistance.

Kind Regards,

Wm. Murdock

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission