On July 18, Governor Mike DeWine signed into law Ohio’s state operating budget, with $69 billion of allocated funds that provide the necessary financial resources for state government to function.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Executive Director William Murdock and the MORPC government affairs team played an active role throughout the budget process and utilized the 2019-2020 Public Policy Agenda to advocate for regional priorities and navigate various budget issues.

**STATE OPERATING BUDGET ADVOCACY PRIORITIES:**

**Reinvesting in Local Communities** – To ensure a continued level of local services statewide, as well as giving our region the ability to deal with pressures of growth, MORPC strongly advocated for the Local Government Fund (LGF) percentage of the General Revenue Fund (GRF) be slightly increased from 1.66 to 2.00 percent.

*Result: This budget increased the LGF by $5 million.*

**Removing a Detrimental Mandate to Local Governments** – Language was inserted into the operating budget that would have provided a tax exemption for new residential development. It would usurp local decision making on land use, community planning, and economic development incentives with a one-size-fits-all mandate. On behalf of its local government members, MORPC strongly encouraged the removal of this language and worked with 13 local government, school, and economic development organizations to have the language vetoed by the governor.

*Result: Governor DeWine vetoed the provision from the budget.*

**Protecting Dedicated Transit Dollars** – The state transportation budget dedicated $70 million of GRF funding per year. Since these funds are from the GRF, MORPC urged legislators to protect these dollars.

*Result: Legislators protected the $70 million.*

**Helping Families Weatherize Their Homes and Save Money** – MORPC supported increasing Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds to be maxed out to 25 percent. These additional dollars will help MORPC staff effectively administer home energy efficiency and safety services that impact many Ohioans.

*Result: This increase was included in House Bill 6, an energy related bill.*

**Census 2020: Ensuring an Accurate Complete Count** – MORPC requested a $1.1 million appropriation, which will provide grants to nonprofit organizations in hard-to-count communities, and to local Complete Count committees, to fund localized communication and outreach to their residents.

*Result: Dedicated dollars for the Complete Count were not included in the budget.*

**Investing in Rural Ohio** – Regional or rural transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) – like the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization – develop transportation plans to better prepare rural and Appalachian communities for both safety and economic growth. MORPC advocated for an allocation of $6 million for use by the state’s six RTPOs. Doing so would advance critical infrastructure programs throughout rural Ohio.

*Result: These funds were not provided in the budget.*

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For more information on MORPC’s government affairs efforts, please visit morpc.org/GovAffairs.