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House Local Government Committee

Lorne Vernon, Public Works Superintendent

House Bill 5

March 10, 2015

Good Morning Madam Chair Anielski and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 5.

My name is Lorne Vernon; I am the Public Works Superintendent for the City of Mentor.

As a member of the Lake County Service Director's association I was honored to take part in the initial program to establish an equipment sharing program among Lake County communities. To some extent many of these communities have shared equipment and even manpower in the past, especially during or after natural disasters. While this informal approach was effective it sometimes left service directors feeling that they were "sticking their necks out" since upper management may not have been aware of these actions. It also left open the potential for disputes should equipment become damaged. Fortunately the ShareOhio program addresses these concerns.

From a financial standpoint all of the communities in Lake County felt the brunt of the recent recession and many are just now recovering. The sharing of equipment through ShareOhio provides local governments with an important opportunity to either save significant dollars or to accomplish public works efforts that would otherwise be left undone. While it is certainly possible to rent heavy equipment it comes at a cost and often times the equipment may not be available exactly when it is needed.

Lastly an important feature of Share Ohio is that much of the equipment loaded into the system is categorized based on the National Incident Management System. In the event of a declared emergency this can save countless hours of research and expedite the FEMA reimbursement process.

Madam Chair, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 5. I would be happy to answer any questions that members of the committee may have at this time.