

Sponsor Testimony HB 470
State and Local Government
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Representative Jay Edwards
94th House District

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice-Chairman Hambley, Ranking Member Barnes, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee thank you for providing me with an opportunity to testify today on House Bill 470. House Bill 470 is legislation that will allow political subdivisions to levy a property tax in excess of the ten million dollar limitation to provide funding for the installation, operation and maintenance of lighting for roads and public spaces.

Political subdivisions under current law generally cover the cost of lighting with their general revenue fund. This legislation would allow these jurisdictions to levy a property tax that will appear on the ballot before voters

That is all I am seeking with this bill. Giving political subdivisions the opportunity to levy this property tax could free up money in their general funds for need-based services while keeping the decision-making controlled locally. This legislation does not have a local impact statement because it is permissive in nature.

The effective planning of street lighting or ineffective planning of street lighting can affect a community for decades. It is in my opinion a part of city infrastructure and planning that is overlooked and under considered. Without proper planning poor street lighting will negatively impact our businesses and tourism. More importantly street lighting affects crime rates and automobile accidents, ultimately leading to greater strain on our first responders and their budgets.

Research suggests that the lighting in community and public spaces tends to make people feel better and safer. It also suggests that with technological advancements the issue of light pollution and energy efficiency are no longer a major concernⁱ.

It is my goal to provide communities in my district and throughout the state of Ohio the tools to be fiscally responsible while keeping their public spaces attractive and safe. With that in mind, I hope to have the committees support in advancing House Bill 470 and would be happy to take any questions. Thank you.

ⁱ Peña-García, Antonio & Hurtado, A & Aguilar-Luzón, Maria Carmen. (2015). Impact of public lighting on pedestrians' perception of safety and well-being. *Safety Science*. 78. .