



April 10, 2018

**House State & Local Government Committee
Adam Schwiebert, Policy Analyst
Interested Party Testimony on HB 500**

Good afternoon, Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee. My name is Adam Schwiebert, and I am a policy analyst at CCAO.

Thank you for the opportunity to present interested party testimony on House Bill 500. CCAO appreciates working with the bill's sponsor to address county issues as they apply to township government. The following summarizes CCAO's thoughts and recommendations to further improve HB 500:

1. County and Regional Planning Commissions

CCAO sees great value in regional and county planning commissions' roles in coordinating planning. Planning commissions have access to county-wide information, including plans, policies and initiatives that townships may be unaware of, but which may impact proposed development. Planning commissions may discover subdivision issues early on when reviewing zoning amendments. If townships opt to not submit amendments to their local planning commissions, some issues may not be identified until after the developer has already invested significant time and resources into the project.

CCAO is appreciative of the proposed amendment that would make this provision only applicable to limited home rule townships. To further strengthen the provision, additional language should be considered to require an AICP-certified planner to be on staff or under contract for those limited home rule townships that choose to not utilize their local zoning commission. AICP certification is the only nationwide, independent verification of planners' qualifications.

2. Township Road Vacation

CCAO remains opposed to this provision. Choosing to vacate or not to vacate a public road can be a complex process that involves considerations beyond a township's borders. The current road vacation process allows county commissioners to consider broader implications that a road vacation (or in this case, a rejection of a road vacation) may have on development and transportation outside of the impacted township. While township roads are assigned for



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maintenance purposes to townships, ultimate authority over the road should remain with the county commissioners.

3. Local Admissions Tax

CCAO respectfully requests that counties be allowed to levy a countywide admissions tax similar to that being offered to townships in HB 500. Attractions that draw large numbers of individuals are likely to increase demand for infrastructure or other county services. Granting counties the permissive authority to levy such a tax allows for counties to recoup costs associated with special attractions.

4. Property Tax Levy for Permanent Improvements and General Infrastructure

HB 500 allows townships to levy a single property tax for capital expenses for most public safety and infrastructure projects. CCAO respectfully requests that counties be provided the same opportunity to fund capital expenses from a single levy. There are significant capital needs at the county level which may be more readily addressed by providing counties this flexibility.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide the thoughts and recommendations on this proposal. I would be happy to try to respond to any questions from members of the committee.