



**Ohio Aviation Association**  
*Proponent Testimony—House Bill 543*  
April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 543. My name is Russ Kline and I am the Operations Manager at Dayton International Airport. I am also the Advocacy Chair for the Ohio Aviation Association and am here today on behalf of the members of OAA.

House Bill 543 seeks to restore access to legal assistance from a county prosecutor that was previously available to an airport authority or port authority board or a regional planning commission. This issue was brought to the attention by a number of small airports in Ohio following the release of an AG's opinion in 2015. Prior to then, county prosecutors were able to provide legal assistance to port and authority boards as well as regional planning commissions.

The 2015 opinion from the Attorney General's office indicated that this practice was not allowed under the Ohio Revised Code since these entities are not considered county entities. There is precedent in the Revised Code for non-county entities to obtain assistance from a county prosecutor; HB 543 follows this precedent.

HB 543 would grant airport authority boards, port authority boards, and regional planning commissions the ability to obtain legal assistance from a county prosecutor in their territory. The bill is permissive and the decision to provide assistance would be up to the county prosecutor and approved by the county commission. The prosecutor is empowered to negotiate fees from the authority board or regional planning commission.

The bill would restore access to these services for airport and port authorities and regional planning commissions. HB 543 creates parity between airports owned by airport and port authorities and airports owned by a county or city; municipal or county airports already have access to legal assistance from a city attorney or county prosecutor, respectively.

This is a common sense piece of legislation that would provide immediate benefits to Ohio airports and other important local government entities. Thank you for your time and consideration; I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.