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September 26, 2017

The Honorable John Eklund
Ohio Senate Ways and Means Committee
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Proponent Testimony for House Bill 69

Dear Chairman Eklund and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association (OFCA) and Ohio's 1,300 fire departments in support of House Bill 69. House Bill 69 will ensure that fire and emergency medical services agencies can financially support the increased demand for their services that accompany economic development.

The Scioto Township Fire Department has experienced first-hand the negative financial impact of tax increment financing districts (TIF's). Last year, the Village of Commercial Point instituted a TIF to fund the infrastructure development of a new residential subdivision. For the next ten years, the 146 homes within this TIF district will pay no additional tax dollars on the improved value of their property for the increased demand on our fire and emergency services. The remaining property owners in our Township and the Village will have to subsidize this service. In addition, the school district and other county levies had the opportunity to negotiate with the Village and to be made whole or at least supplement their revenues with income tax dollars from the new residents.

TIF's divert tax dollars voted and approved by the residents for fire and emergency services. I can appreciate diverting road and/or other infrastructure tax dollars to an area specifically covered by a TIF because that ensures the dollars are allocated to that specific infrastructure. I can also understand diverting school levy tax dollars to the extent that they can be supplemented by the income tax dollars generated by the new growth. Fire and emergency services, though, are the only taxing entity that is prohibited by a TIF from ensuring they can financially accommodate the increased demand on their services from the growth or development of a TIF district. This is unfair at its best and unconscionable at its worst.



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For the foregoing reasons, I strongly encourage you and your fellow Committee Members to support House Bill 69 and provide Ohio's fire and emergency services the ability to adequately and equitably grow with the demands placed on us by economic growth in our communities. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Yours in public safety,

Chief Porter R. Welch, J.D., OFE, OFC
Scioto Township Fire Department

cc: Vice-Chairman Senator Lou Terhar
Ranking Member Senator Sandra Williams