



September 25, 2019

The Honorable Stephen Hambley
The Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: House Bill 288, Disallowing Eminent Domain for Recreational Trails

Dear Chair Hambley, House Civil Justice Committee Members, and the Ohio General Assembly:

Please accept this written testimony on behalf of Tri-State Trails regarding House Bill 288. Tri-State Trails strongly opposes House Bill 288, which would remove the ability to use eminent domain for recreation trail projects.

As the Ohio Department of Natural Resources recently confirmed during its extensive Ohio Trails Vision community engagement process, trails are a critical amenity valued by many Ohioans. Eminent domain is an important tool for local governments and park districts to have in their toolbox to build out complex trail corridors. Most of Ohio's park districts and other agencies have never used eminent domain for a recreational trail. Local government bodies recognize that this approach should be exercised with great discretion, but there is a general understanding that eminent domain can be an appropriate tool in limited cases. When exercised, landowners are fairly compensated for the easements required to advance trail projects around the State.

I urge you to preserve eminent domain as a tool for local governments and park districts to utilize to connect and expand Ohio's great trail network.

Respectfully,

Wade Johnston, AICP
Director, Tri-State Trails

Tri-State Trails is an alliance of trail advocates advancing a vision to connect and expand the regional trail network in Greater Cincinnati. An initiative of Green Umbrella, Tri-State Trails activates cross-sector collaboration to expand access to walkable and bikeable communities to all people. We believe that trails enhance our region's communities, resulting in healthier people and stronger economies. Our mission is to connect people and places with a regional trails network that enhances vibrancy and equity in our community.