



Good afternoon, Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the House Civil Justice Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present opponent testimony on House Bill 288.

The City of Dublin opposes this bill, which threatens municipal control over eminent domain and is once again an erosion of home rule authority as granted by the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

Recreational trails are the foundational component of Dublin's pedestrian and bicycle network. With more than 130 miles of shared-use paths, the majority of residents and visitors prefer to traverse our city via our extensive network of recreational trails.

The bill, as drafted by Rep. Manning (R-New Middletown), is specific to a local issue involving a recreational trail in Mahoning County. As such, the issue should be handled on a local level and not applied statewide penalizing other communities, where it may be necessary to apply eminent domain for the greater good of the general public.

HB 288 would eliminate the City of Dublin's ability to ensure connectivity at integral points throughout our community. While Dublin rarely turns to the use of eminent domain, the passing of HB 288 would effectively strip our ability to ensure the safety and quality of life for our community. Without the ability to employ eminent domain, the City would not be able to connect gaps that are essential to the connectivity of our trail network. With the inability to provide these necessary connections, riders and users of all ages would be forced to traverse sections of high-speed roadways that have not been built to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Recreational trails promote healthy options for recreation; provide affordable, environmentally friendly alternatives for transportation; and support the economic development and growth of communities across Ohio. A robust, well-planned trail network is essential to the continued growth and well-being of our local communities and state. HB 288 would remove an important tool in continuing the connectivity of Ohio's trail network.

For these reasons, we encourage your opposition to this legislation.