



**Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee
Interested Party Testimony, HB 674 (Hillyer)**

Heritage Ohio

June 3, 2020

Thank you Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Commerce and Labor Committee for the opportunity for Heritage Ohio to provide interested party written testimony in support of House Bill 674.

Heritage Ohio is Ohio's statewide downtown revitalization non-profit that has been the coordinating agency for the Ohio Main Street Program since 1997. Currently we manage 22 certified Main Street programs and work with 35 Downtown Affiliates to assist with community revitalization and economic development efforts. We also assist dozens of additional communities with technical assistance through a CDBG grant from the Office of Community Development.

The DORA Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas has already proven to be a highly effective means of stimulating the economy, pre-covid. We know that streamlining the language to allow smaller cities to implement this more quickly would help ALL of the businesses in those downtowns that chose to enact a DORA.

We think the endorsement by the legislature to ease the process will give communities more confidence that this is a safe program that has met success in twenty-two communities so far...with many more scrambling to get one in place now that it is recognized as a way to help save their restaurants.

Because of our work across Ohio, we know that restaurants are the anchor businesses driving traffic in our downtown commercial districts. The survival and success of our restaurant industry going forward will impact not only restaurants but are important for the vitality and stability of our other Main Street businesses.

Heritage Ohio supports the swift passage of HB 674 to help save these Ohio businesses, which are the backbone to our local economies.

We can be a resource to communities, sharing best practices for implementation, signage, cups, wristbands, etc., which help the public quickly understand the DORA parameters.

Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions, we can be reached at 614-258-6200.

Joyce Barret

Executive Director

Duane Van Dyke

Chair, Government Relations