



March 18, 2019

Representative Paul Zeltwanger
District 54
77 S. High Street
12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Representative Zeltwanger:

I am writing as a proponent for the pending legislation that will reinstate the Rural Industrial Park Loan program (House Bill 98). Harrison County is the fifth least populous county in the state of Ohio. During the great recession because of the downturn in the economy, particularly the downturn in the coal economy of which Harrison County was heavily reliant upon during the past several decades, the county's coffers could barely make payroll. Over 68% of our county's coal resources has been strip-mined and sent out of the area without a diversification of the local economy within the past 58 years. Thus, Harrison County is behind in infrastructure, and expansion of the local economy compared to the rest of the state and the neighboring counties.

Eastern Ohio most recently has been responsible for over 70 billion dollars of investment through the oil and gas industry. Yet, we have not realized our full potential because we are lacking available sites and buildings for new businesses to occupy or build on. Furthermore, we have not benefitted from the economic growth that Ohio has enjoyed following the Great Recession. This, in large part, is due to a shortage in competitive sites and buildings. The site selection process, which is a major driver of economic growth, identifies sites and buildings that have the necessary utilities and studies in place to minimize risk and maximize speed for industry. Simply put, if communities do not have an inventory of sites and buildings, they do not have a product to market to site selectors and industry. Thus, if this program is not implemented and more sites are not available it will have global and geopolitical implications resulting in the Appalachia Basin not being able to land projects and thus becoming a second petrochemical hub.

Previous state programs, such as the Rural Industrial Park Loan Program, Urban & Rural Initiatives and the Industrial Site Improvement Fund, were utilized with great success to develop speculative sites and buildings in distressed areas of Ohio. Unfortunately, there is no such program in place to fund initiatives. The Facilities Establishment Fund, which has been receiving loan repayments from previous iterations of development programs, is well-capitalized with roughly \$200,000,000 in the fund.

Assistance towards the distressed areas of Ohio will have a strong return on investment for the state. In the short-term, funds will be recouped for the development costs associated with these projects and in long-term the taxes generated through commercial activity, sales and income tax will grow Ohio's General Revenue Fund, while employing Ohioans. This program is a win-win. Currently we have experienced an influx of the oil and gas economy that has invested billions into the economy. Thus giving us a second chance to diversify our economy to what it should have always been. We are still trying to catch up on basic infrastructure needs that the rest of the state enjoys and have industrial park sites developed and readily available is a major need. I am supportive of the reinstatement of this important tool for economic development in rural Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas A. Homrighausen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nicholas A. Homrighausen
Harrison County CIC Executive Director

cc: Mike Jacoby
APEG President & CEO

Ed Looman
APEG Project Manager