



City of Mentor

8500 Civic Center Boulevard
Mentor, Ohio 44060-2499
440-255-1100
www.cityofmentor.com

Council-manager
government since 1963

June 26, 2019

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HB 138. As introduced, this legislation will save municipalities from having to incur time consuming and costly mailings as currently required by law by modifying the threshold of when to notify property owners of special assessments to a more reasonable figure.

The City of Mentor, Ohio asks that the Ohio Legislature approve increasing the notification threshold for certain special assessments, most notably street lighting, by certified mail, from \$250.00 to \$500.00 (ORC Section 727.14). The current threshold has been in existence without change since 1963 and has over the years required a greater number of certified letters being mailed to additional property owners, on an annual basis, as the costs for street lighting rises over time. This results in ever increasing mailing expenses. By way of example, the City of Mentor prepared Four Hundred Forty-One [441] certified letters in its annual 2018 street lighting assessment at a cost of over \$2,600.00. Thirteen years ago the cost to the City was less than half of what it is today, coming in at approximately \$1,200.00.

Furthermore, considerable staff time is spent monitoring, tracking and administering this service, which has become increasingly burdensome as a consequence of a threshold that has not been adjusted for inflation in fifty-six (56) years. In other words, what was once considered a sufficient threshold, in 1963 dollars, required markedly less mailings, is now an insignificant threshold that results in exponentially more notices being mailed and having to be accounted for.

Lastly, the advent of electronic communications today provides ample opportunity, through multiple platforms, by which the public can become informed of such matters. For example, the City of Mentor has a robust electronic media presence through its website, Facebook page, smart phone app, and other forms of social media by which residents can review exhibits attached to legislation such as an assessment ordinance. The costs incurred by excessive, redundant and often unnecessary, certified mail is ultimately born by the taxpayer and this legislation serves to reduce such excess when practicable.

The City of Mentor asks for your assistance in amending ORC Section 727.14, by increasing the \$250.00 threshold to \$500.00 for the reasons stated herein. If at all possible, we would suggest the addition of language that would allow the statutory amount to be adjusted on a

periodic basis based on inflation, eliminating the likelihood of the legislature having to address this issue on an ongoing, albeit infrequent, basis.

The City of Mentor appreciates the Committee's efforts in considering HB 138 and would ask that both the Committee and the Legislature give its approval to this cost and time-saving measure. Should any questions arise or any additional information be needed, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony J. Zampedro', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Anthony J. Zampedro
Acting City Manager
City of Mentor, Ohio