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Chair: Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture,
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Chair Green, Vice-Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, I come before you today to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 295. The purpose of this legislation is to provide a definition of a “low-speed electric scooter” and to create default regulations for where and how low-speed electric scooters are to be operated. Critically, the bill does not force these default regulations on local communities. Instead, House Bill 295 retains local control and ensures the authority to regulate low-speed electric scooters within local jurisdictions.

By creating and codifying a definition of low-speed electric scooters, this legislation accomplishes several goals. First, it eliminates any confusion as to whether low-speed electric scooters are or should be considered “motor vehicles.” Second, the definition allows for the establishment of default regulations for the safe operation of low-speed electric scooters. These include requiring riders to yield to pedestrians, requiring that any low-speed electric scooter operating at night include a head light and rear reflector, and imposing a speed limitation among other safety precautions. Third, it allows for the creation of a criminal penalty for any person who operates a low-speed electric scooter in violation of these default regulations.

I refer to the regulations created by House Bill 295 as default, because a critical component of this bill is that it maintains local control and authority over the regulation of low-speed electric scooters. Local communities and park districts will retain the ability to create and impose additional or unique regulations on the operation of low-speed electric scooters. What House Bill 295 will ensure, however, is that there is a minimum set of rules in place for any person using or operating a low-speed electric scooter.

This bill was previously included in the House passed version of the Transportation Budget. The language is the result of a compromise among low-speed scooter companies and local governments and their representative organizations. Entities and organizations who worked to craft the compromise language before you include: the Ohio Municipal League, the City of Columbus, the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, and the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks.

Thank you for your consideration. I ask for your support of House Bill 295 and am happy to take any questions.