



Senate Bill 357
September 2, 2020 - Senate Finance Committee
Amista Lipot, Mayors' Partnership for Progress Executive Director
Written Proponent Testimony

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee; thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 357 (SB 357), which provides the remaining federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) dollars to local governments across our state. In addition, thank you for your leadership and partnership as we confront this public health crisis caused by COVID-19, as well as the economic recession associated with this unprecedented pandemic.

My name is Amista Lipot and I am the Executive Director of the Mayors' Partnership for Progress. MPP is a bipartisan group of mayors and city managers across 18 Appalachian Counties in Southeast Ohio, with more than 120 City and Village municipalities and representing a population of nearly 800,000.

Local governments are on the frontlines of our nation's local public health emergency response and overall public safety efforts. Currently, our local, state, and federal governments must work together to address this crisis. With this said, we urge the Senate Finance Committee to swiftly pass SB 357. This legislation would disperse the remaining \$650 million CARES relief dollars to local governments under 500,000 people, who did not receive relief dollars directly from the U.S. Treasury.

As local budgets continue to suffer the economic impacts of COVID-19, the distribution of these remaining CARES dollars will play a critical role in ensuring that local governments can continue to deliver quality services to Ohioans. We hoped Congress or the U.S. Treasury would have acted to make these dollars more flexible, allowing local governments to use these dollars as revenue replacement based on specific community needs. Unfortunately, they have not to date done this, which has brought a greater urgency to distribute these dollars quickly.

Due to this inaction thus far, we recommend amending the bill by extending the October 15th deadline for fiscal officers to return unencumbered dollars, to November 20th or later. This would provide local governments a little more time to utilize these dollars effectively and efficiently. The plethora of needs for these dollars in rural Southeast Ohio is clearly there. Our citizens continue to struggle with poverty and lack of employment options, our students and employees continue to lack simple broadband to complete schoolwork and off site employment, and our businesses and nonprofits are struggling to keep their doors open.

As local governments continue to adapt through this crisis, we stand ready to be effective partners. Again, thank you for your leadership as we work together to combat the pandemic and please never hesitate to contact me whenever the Mayors' Partnership for Progress can be of assistance at 740-649-8654 or lipot@ohio.edu, with any questions or whenever the MPP can be of service.

Sincerely, 

Gary Goosman, President
Mayor, Amesville



Steve Patterson, Vice-President
Mayor, Athens



Amista Lipot
Executive Director



Mayors' Partnership for Progress Members:

- Athens Co. – Albany, Amesville, Athens, Buchtel, Chauncey, Coolville,
Glouster, Jacksonville, Nelsonville, Trimble
- Gallia Co. – Centerville, Cheshire, Crown City, Gallipolis, Rio Grande, Vinton
- Highland Co. – Greenfield, highland, Hillsboro, Leesburg, Lynchburg,
Mowrystown, Sinking Spring
- Hocking Co. – Laurelville, Logan, Murray City
- Jackson Co. – Coalton, Jackson, Oak Hill, Wellston
- Lawrence Co. – Athlaia, Chesapeake, Coal Grove, Hanging Rock, Ironton,
Proctorville, South Point
- Meigs Co. – Middleport, Pomeroy, Racine, Rutland, Syracuse
- Monroe Co. – Antioch, Beallsville, Clarington, Graysville, Jerusalem, Lewisville,
Miltonsburg, Stafford, Wilson, Woodsfield
- Morgan Co. – Chesterhill, Malta, McConnelsville, Stockport
- Muskingum Co. – Adamsville, Dresden, Frazeyburg, Fultonham, Gratiot, New
Concord, Norwich, Philo, South Zanesville, Zanesville
- Noble Co. – Batesville, Belle Valley, Caldwell, Dexter City, Sarahsville,
Summerfield
- Perry Co. – Corning, Crooskville, Glenford, Hemlock, Junction City, new
Lexington, New Straitsville, Rendville, Roseville, Shawnee,
Somerset, Thornville
- Pike Co. – Beaver, Piketon, Waverly
- Ross Co. – Adelphi, Bainbridge, Chillicothe, Clarksburg, Frankfort, Kingston,
South Salem
- Scioto Co. – New Boston, Otway, Portsmouth, Rarden, South Webster
- Tuscarawas Co. – Baltic, Barnhill, Bolivar, Dennison, Dover, Gnaddenhutten,
Midvale, Mineral City, New Philadelphia, Newcomerstown, Port
Washington, Tuscarawas
- Vinton Co. – Hamden, McArthur, Wilkesville, Zaleski
- Washington Co. – Belpre, Beverly, Lowell, Lower Salem, Macksburg, Marietta,
New Matamoras