



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
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PLANNING COMMISSION

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Senate Bill 357
September 2, 2020
Senate Finance Committee
William Murdock, MORPC 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 William Murdock and I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). MORPC is a voluntary association of over 70 local governments across Central Ohio's rural, suburban, and urban areas. We provide programs, services, and funding related to transportation, land use, data, sustainability, and economic prosperity.

Local governments are on the frontlines of our nation's local public health emergency response and overall public safety efforts. Now, more than ever, local, state, and federal governments must work together to address this crisis. It is in this vein that 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 had 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 did not, which has brought a greater urgency to distribute these dollars quickly.

Due to this inaction, we recommend amending the bill by extending the October 15th deadline for fiscal officers to return unencumbered dollars, to November 20th. This would provide local governments as a little more time to effectively and efficiently utilize these dollars. The needs for these dollars is clearly there, and it won't be enough. Just since February, about 1.2 million local government jobs have been lost. Moody's Analytics researchers estimate that 2.8 million more could be lost without more federal help. If that happens, state and local job cuts stand to shave about 2.6 percent from overall pre-crisis employment levels.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Karen J. Angelou
Chair

Erik J. Janas
Vice Chair

Chris Amorose Groomes
Secretary

SB 357 will help invest in our state's economic future by distributing critical federal relief to local communities. We sincerely appreciate Sen. Dolan's leadership to create a fast distribution formula for these critical federal funds and we look forward to a continued partnership that rebuilds a strong, vibrant economy in Ohio and assists local governments in achieving stable fiscal footing in the coming months.

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 MORPC can be of assistance.

Thank you again for the opportunity to express MORPC's support of this important bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me, at 614-233- 4101 or at wmurdock@morpc.org, with any questions or whenever MORPC can be of service.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Murdock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William Murdock, AICP
MORPC Executive Director