



## **PERRY COUNTY COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION**

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**109 E. Gay St. P.O. Box 579 | Somerset, Ohio 43783**

**HB64: Operating Budget—FY 2016-2017**  
**Interested Party Testimony on the Ohio Development Services Agency Budget**  
**Ohio Senate Finance-Workforce Subcommittee**  
**Service Station Clean-up Fund**

**Tom Johnson**  
**Executive Director**  
**May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Chairman Beagle, Vice Chair Williams and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Workforce Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to offer interested party testimony on the Development Services Agency Budget, as part of the 2016-2017 Operating Budget (HB64).

My name is Tom Johnson. I am the Mayor of the Village of Somerset in Perry County and the Executive Director of the newly formed Perry County Community Improvement Corporation. Perry County recently established its own community improvement corporation to aid in redevelopment. For a site in Crooksville, the County has been actively working with Ohio EPA, development services agency, and jobs Ohio to help a manufacturing organization expand onto a brownfield property. With funding from available sources like these, the CIC may consider acquisition of eligible properties in order to help them move forward and create jobs for the community. We have applied for a U.S. EPA community-wide assessment grant that will help us identify and prioritize redevelopment sites.

Centered in the villages of Roseville and Crooksville, Perry County has a rich history of pottery manufacturing with over 50 plants operating in Crooksville alone at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Known as the “Pottery Capital of the World” this area produced some of the most famous American art pottery lines such as McCoy, Hull, Crooksville Pottery and others.

Perry County has much economic redevelopment potential locked-up in contaminated pottery sites and remediating these locations will help the eventual revitalization of some of Ohio’s most depressed communities that historically thrived on small manufacturing enterprises. We



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hope that the Service Station Cleanup Fund is the first of several programs that leverage the investments needed for these sites.

We recently completed work on an Ohio EPA Phase I environmental assessment for a former pottery manufacturing site in the Village of Crooksville. This site has been selected by an investor group that is considering it for an advanced manufacturing site that potentially will employ nearly 100 people. Obtaining funding for a Phase II assessment and Phase III environmental clean-up is a critical step in making this opportunity a reality.

We believe that several changes to the bill would improve our ability to access this critical funding source improve our environment. They include:

- 1. Expand the purpose of the fund** - beyond service station and petroleum based contamination sites to include other categories such as contaminated manufacturing sites.
- 2. Allow Infrastructure upgrades - *installation or upgrade of the minimum amount of infrastructure*** that is necessary to make a site operational after other clean up measures. Many of our abandoned manufacturing sites have been stripped of copper wiring, etc. and
- 3. Expand the Definition of Property Owner** – to allow funding to be used for sites that are in the process of being acquired by county designated economic entity, not just owned by a unit of local government. This will help mitigate the risk of ownership for sites where assessment and quantification of environmental risks are not yet known.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me, at 740 621-3580 or tom.johnson1367@gmail.com, with any questions or concerns.