



Violet Township Fire Department

Michael J. Little, Chief
For Emergencies, Dial 9-1-1

We Are Your Friends For Life

March 14, 2017

H.B. 69 Proponent Testimony – Violet Township Fire Department, Fairfield County

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice-Chair and Committee Members,

I am Michael J. Little, Fire Chief for the Violet Township Fire Department in Pickerington, Ohio. My department employs nearly 100 personnel, including both full-time and part-time, and covers a resident population of approximately 40,000.

Violet Township is located in the northwest corner of Fairfield County and encompasses Interstate 70 on the north side and U.S. Route 33 on the south. The city of Pickerington is the largest municipality in the Township. Portions of the cities of Reynoldsburg and Canal Winchester are also in the Township.

I have been employed by Violet Township for 23 years and have seen our run volumes increase annually with the commercial and residential development of these areas. Our demand for service is growing but our revenues do not due to the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) that these municipalities have or will enact.

Since 1998, the City of Pickerington has enacted ten (10) TIFs. These 10 TIFs are for 30 years and have cost the Department \$815,413 in tax revenue. Recently, the Pickerington City Council approved legislation to approve six (6) more TIFs. The six TIFs are for 30 years. These TIFs encompass 31 parcels with a current appraised value of \$16,756,990 and tax receipts to Violet Township of \$37,264. These sites will only increase in value, as will the tax receipts, once developed. With 30 year TIFs in place, the department will be forced to provide service without any increase in tax revenues. This amounts to an unfunded mandate from the City.

In 1999, the City of Reynoldsburg enacted three (3) TIFs that affected my department. These TIFs are again for 30 years and have cost my department \$2,486,675 in tax revenue. This amounts to another unfunded mandate to my department.

Because of TIF laws, money from our fire levies is being diverted by these TIFs to build infrastructure for the proposed developments. The City has the ability to collect income tax on the developments. My department is still obligated to provide services to these residents and businesses even though no payment is received from the levied tax (other than the taxes prior to development). Without doubt, these new developments will create additional run volume, increase fire inspection duties and place other burdens on our system.

House Bill 69 is an opportunity for us to realize some or all of the monies from our levied taxes. This bill will give us a voice when municipalities, such as Pickerington, attempt to offer new TIF legislation to developers. I urge you to approve H.B. 69. Your approval allows for fairness to township fire departments and will give them a seat at the table when these TIF discussions arise.

I want to thank Representative Cupp and his co-sponsors for bringing this bill forward. Also, I would like to thank the Committee for listening to my testimony.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Little".

Michael J. Little
Fire Chief