



Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission

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Chair Green, Vice Chair Greenspan, and Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written proponent testimony on House Bill 95 (HB 95), which we believe provides an urgently needed, common sense solution to a growing and dangerous safety concern on our roads.

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 60 Central Ohio political subdivisions. We are Central Ohio's regional council and provide programs, services, and funding related to transportation, energy, data, and economic growth. We are committed to collaborating and creating new strategies that continue to enhance our region.

Transportation technology is quickly changing and we consider ourselves lucky to be working on transportation policy during this period of innovation. We know advances in technology can increase efficiency, heighten safety, and provide better services. Yet, technology can be a double-edged sword and distracted driving is an unintended consequence of such advancements.

As you know, distracted driving is a growing trend that has caused an increase in deaths and injuries on our roads. MORPC has a long history of working closely with local communities to ensure that residents are safe while traveling. Our safety program staff actively analyze crash data, so we can better understand why crashes occur and how certain populations, behaviors, and locations are more susceptible to a deadly traffic crash. It is for these reasons and more that we strongly support HB 95.

While we believe that our state law should ultimately move towards making distracted driving a primary offense, we realize this is a critical first step forward in addressing this issue. We also support how the bill creates an enhanced driving penalty for "distracted driving" that only comes into play when a driver is pulled over for another moving violation. The amount of the fine that will be assessed for the additional penalty of driving while distracted will be \$100 for each offense. The fee will be paid on top of the fine assessed for the original violation.

Since 2011, MORPC has supported legislation that curbs distracted driving. In 2015, we submitted proponent testimony on Senate Bill 146, a previous version of HB 95. Furthermore, MORPC has an internal policy that bans staff from distracted driving.

In conclusion, we support HB 95 because it curtails unsafe driving. We believe it is essential to provide law enforcement the necessary tools to deter distracted driving. Doing such will save lives and make our roads safer for everyone.

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

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Murdock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

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Chair

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Vice Chair

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Secretary