



Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission

**Ohio Senate Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee
House Bill 95**

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**Written Proponent Testimony
William Murdock, Executive Director of MORPC**

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Chair Uecker, Vice Chair Wilson, and Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written proponent testimony on House Bill 95 (HB95), 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. Furthermore, MORPC has an internal policy that bans staff from distracted driving. It is for these reasons and more that we strongly support HB95.

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.

Earlier this year, I submitted proponent testimony to the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee and I thank members of the House for passing this common sense bill. In fact MORPC has supported legislation that curbs distracted driving since 2011.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Matt Greeson
Chair

Rory McGuiness
Vice Chair

Karen J. Angelou
Secretary

In conclusion, we support HB95 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 written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "k".