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Ohio Architects Board

Ohio Landscape Architects Board

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Ohio Senate Committee on General Government and Agency Review

**Ohio Architects Board and
Ohio Landscape Architects Board
Testimony regarding Budget Recommendations for FY 2020/2021
Shannon Himes, Executive Director
April 30, 2019**

Good afternoon, Chair Schuring, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Minority Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Committee on General Government and Agency Review. I truly appreciate the opportunity to provide an overview of the Ohio Architects Board and Ohio Landscape Architects Board and our budget recommendations. I am Shannon Himes, and I serve as the Executive Director for both boards. I am pleased to join you today to testify in support of the Boards' budget in House Bill 166.

Although the Architects Board and the Landscape Architects Board are two separate regulatory bodies, they operate under one budget using the same administrative staff. Our full-time staff is small and efficient, with an executive director, an investigator, and two administrative personnel. The Architects Board consists of five members, all licensed architects, who are appointed by the Governor for a five-year term. The Landscape Architects Board also consists of five Governor-appointed members serving for five-year terms, of which three are landscape architects, one is an applied professional, and one is a public member. The Boards are responsible for ensuring that Ohio architects and landscape architects meet the rigorous educational, experience, and ethical requirements of the profession to secure the integrity of structures and the built environment, thereby protecting the health, safety, and welfare of all Ohioans.

The practice of architecture and landscape architecture is diverse and complicated. Architects and landscape architects design and plan interior or exterior spaces, respectively, taking into consideration aesthetics, code requirements, safety and accessibility, functionality for the client, costs, and the natural environment. They

are project managers, overseeing the entire construction project and communicating with and coordinating the efforts of construction crews, civil engineers, contractors, zoning and city officials, and each other. Their job is to turn ideas into reality and create spaces that are not only beautiful, safe, and functional, but serve the long-term needs of the public and the environment.

Given the comprehensive nature of their practices, architects and landscape architects must complete years of schooling, pass a rigorous examination covering all aspects of their profession, and log thousands of experience hours before they can become licensed and practice in Ohio. This is true for architects and landscape architects nationally as well, as all 50 states require the licensure of architects and landscape architects.

The Ohio Boards are responsible for licensing and registering over 8,000 architects, landscape architects, and firms. They ensure timely and appropriate licensure and license renewals, monitor compliance with continuing education requirements, investigate and enforce violations of our laws and code of ethics, and educate the licensees on the laws and rules which govern licensees and consumers on the services provided by the architects and landscape architects.

The Ohio Boards strive to be national leaders for architecture and landscape architecture regulation. Thanks to our partnerships with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) and the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB), professionals seeking to do business in Ohio can obtain a reciprocal license in mere days. This helps to create a truly portable license and removes time barriers for construction projects in Ohio. The Ohio Architects Board also eases the financial burden of licensure for student architects-in-training by offering a full reimbursement of their internship program fees, thereby facilitating an early path to licensure.

The Boards have demonstrated track records of insuring excellent levels of customer service and public protection, and regularly seek to reduce costs and enhance operational efficiencies. Our fees have been largely unchanged over the past twenty years and remain some of the lowest licensing fees in the country for architects and landscape architects.

The Boards are requesting \$638,661 in appropriation (all funds) for FY20, which is a 4.8% increase over the estimated operating costs for FY19. The Boards are requesting \$646,294 in FY21, an increase in 1.2% over FY20, for a total biennium budget request of nearly \$1.29 million. These increases are due to rising personnel

costs (due to mandatory cost-of-living raises), additional banking fees, and increased costs for the eLicensing system. The Boards are completely self-supported through revenue generated from license applications and renewal fees, and revenues have consistently supported expenditures. The Boards do not receive any funds from the State's General Revenue Fund. As required, by the Ohio Revised Code ORC 4734.54, all receipts of the Boards are deposited into the Occupational and Professional Licensing Fund (4K90).

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity to present the Ohio Architects Board's and Landscape Architects Board's executive budget proposal to you today. The Boards have an enormous responsibility to protect Ohioans and the built environment by ensuring the highest professional standards for Ohio's architects and landscape architects. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of the Boards' regulatory missions. This concludes my prepared remarks and I welcome your questions and comments.