

Testimony of Donald Larson

before the Ohio Senate Government and Agency Review Committee

14 May 2019

Chairman Schuring, my name is Donald Larson and I wish to testify in support of HB 166, and in particular, to provide this Committee with information relating to the proposed development of non stop international flights between Ohio and Europe. Such direct flights are a known factor in attracting foreign direct investment by overseas companies and businesses in the State of Ohio and often result in expanded international trade to the benefit of the State of Ohio

I am the President of the British American Chamber of Commerce Ohio . We are one of 22 similar organizations located in many of the principal business centers of the USA and the UK. Our objective is to promote and support international trade and business between the US and the UK The Chamber celebrates 25 years of operations this year.

According to the Ohio Development Services Agency and other organizations:

There are over 400 UK companies with subsidiaries in Ohio. who are part of a group of 1500 European companies with subsidiaries in Ohio.

33,000 Ohioans are employed by UK companies part of almost 250,000 employed by International businesses here.

Ohio exported \$2.1 Billion in products to the UK in 2017 and that does not include the service industry which takes the total closer to \$3 billion. Ohio imports over \$1 billion each year from the UK, a net surplus in trade in Ohio's favor. Every year, Ohio, as one of the top 10 exporting States, sends \$50 billion in products overseas. Of the over 180 countries that receive Ohio exports annually, the UK is the 4th largest export market

Some of the UK companies doing business with Ohio are household names such as Airbus, LexisNexis and Price Waterhouse Coopers. In Columbus, the UK beer brewery company Brewdog has chosen Ohio as their US headquarters as they prepare to expand nationwide. We at British American Chamber are aware of other UK companies looking at Ohio and are working with state and local economic development organizations to attract and develop such businesses.

Ohio companies also have significant operations and facilities in the UK. They include, among many others, Eaton, Shiloh, Steris, Timken, Jones Day and the latest addition to this number, the Cleveland Clinic, which is building a significant UK facility near Buckingham Palace.

Last month we were very pleased to welcome the British Ambassador to the United States and to arrange meetings for him in Cleveland and Columbus. The Ambassador met with Governor DeWine, JobsOhio and many others. HB 166 is important for many reasons. One of those is that

it provides a significant opportunity for the State to provide financial support to our airports in their work to attract international carriers so that direct regular flights between Ohio and the UK and Europe can be achieved. In Ohio, we are in direct competition with neighboring and other midwestern states such as Pennsylvania and Indiana for such direct routes and airport facilities improvements to support them. For example, British Airways has recently taken the decision to operate a direct flight from London to Pittsburgh. With that decision will follow economic development and business. How can the State of Ohio and this Committee make sure that Ohio airports and our economic development agencies have the same business attraction and infrastructure improvement tools available to them as our competitors? How can we strengthen Ohio's ability to attract investments and develop international trade ?

Part of our work at the British American Chamber of Commerce is to monitor and seek to increase the already significant volume of trade and investments between Ohio and the UK.

Transatlantic flights on fuel efficient, twin engine, long range aircraft such as the 777 and 787 , when combined with investments in Ohio's airports' funding and infrastructure to take advantage of changes in industry dynamics is a valuable tool that can be used to attract more business, investments and jobs to Ohio.

Mr. Chairman, we would be pleased to provide more information to the Committee on this subject. We hope that provision will be made in HB 166 to support our airports and economic development agencies. Next month I will be in Miami together with other leaders of the British American Business Council from the UK and the USA for an annual conference. I look forward to telling them that Ohio is open for international business.