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Chair
Sourcewell

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Andrea Scobie
Vice Chair
OMNIA Partners

Ohio Senate
Local Government and Elections Committee
Columbus, OH 43215

John Orlando
Treasurer
E&I Cooperative
Services

Testimony in Support of SB 260

Ronnie Barnes
HGAC-Buy

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the
Local Government and Elections Committee

Dr. Chad Coquette
Sourcewell

I'm Tammy Rimes, Executive Director for the National Cooperative Procurement
Partners (NCPP) Association.

Gary Link
E&I Cooperative
Services

Doug Looney
OMNIA Partners

I am speaking today **to reaffirm and support** SB 260 as introduced by Senator Lang. As
North America's association for cooperative procurement, NCPP's membership is
comprised of purchasing cooperatives, strategic suppliers, affiliated organizations, and
public procurement professionals to serve as an educational voice, and advocate for
cooperative procurement.

As part of this testimony, I also want to share my insights as a former Purchasing
Director and long-time government manager.

Cooperative contracts have been a growing phenomenon over the past decade. One of
the biggest reasons is because it can save money by leveraging the spend of multiple
entities using the same contract, thus driving efficiencies, and lowering pricing for all.

However, probably more importantly, it provides time savings as well.

Any procurement professional can share that one of the biggest complaints about the
government construction bid process is that it can be very slow. As a Purchasing Agent,
I was often frustrated with not being able to be as responsive as my customers wished.
When a classroom has a leaky roof and the ceiling tiles are starting fall, it needs to be
fixed now. Or when the athletic floors of a gym need to be completely replaced, it's
almost impossible to bid and award that contract within the 4-6 weeks of a summer
break. When an accident takes out a big portion of a building wall, it needs to be
repaired quickly to maintain the structure and allow it to be inhabited.

However, the problem is that the typical construction bid process can take months to bid and award. And that's where cooperative contracts help serve those needs. The solicitation process has already been done, resulting in a contract that can now be piggybacked upon by other government agencies.

And cooperative contracts can come in all shapes and sizes – from local municipal government collaboration efforts to regional or national cooperatives.

It's important for you to know what happens behind the scenes when a purchasing manager is deciding when and if to use a cooperative contract. Even though the contract is ready to go, there is still a due diligence process conducted. The original RFP, the evaluation process, where it was advertised, the final contract, insurance requirements and terms and conditions are all reviewed and evaluated. The due diligence allows us to confirm that best practices in public procurement were followed and we vet that contract in as many ways as we would for our own bid processes.

Now just imagine that I conduct that due diligence, and so does every other agency across the state and nation who use that same contract. You could say that a national cooperative contract is probably vetted and certified by more agencies than any government contract out there. And audits are routinely conducted. As a Purchasing Agent, I am prepared for an audit on any chosen cooperative contract – everything done in public procurement and public works projects has to be open, transparent and legally defensible.

In addition to the savings in both time and money, another big benefit of cooperatives is that while they may be awarded at a national or regional level, the actual work is done by local contractors and suppliers. This keeps money in local communities.

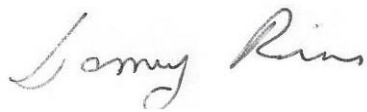
One of the primary tenets for good public stewardship is the idea of competition. Agencies desire to have as many alternatives as possible, rather than creating restrictions, eliminating options, or taking the decision-making process away from your qualified professionals. Having as many choices as possible in cooperative contracts makes good business sense.

During the last two years, your government teams rose to the challenge of the pandemic. Whether it was obtaining PPE products, building new structures for traffic flow, keeping projects on track, transitioning students and employees to work from home, your procurement teams have been behind the scenes filling those ever-changing needs. They are truly heroes for each of their organizations.

I personally want to thank Senator Lang with the foresight to introduce this legislation to support your political subdivisions across the State of Ohio. It helps them serve their customers, and ultimately saves money for the taxpayers and residents of your state.

The National Cooperative Procurement Partners appreciates your consideration and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tammy Rimes".

Tammy Rimes, MPA
NCPD Executive Director