



Senator Andrew O. Brenner – 19th District
Senator Al Landis – 31st District
House Finance Committee
June 12th, 2024
Senate Bill 94 – Sponsor Testimony

Good afternoon, Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for allowing us to present testimony today on Senate Bill 94. This legislation seeks to modernize electronic records and conveyances maintained by county recorders.

The overarching purpose of the legislation is to ensure public records are accessible and preserved, while simplifying real estate transactions. To that end, Senate Bill 94 would establish a process by which conveyances could be done electronically in every county and require recorders to keep digital copies of records from 1980 on. When similar language was introduced in the House last year as House Bill 237, it had the support of the Bar Association, Recorders' Association, Bankers League, Land Title Association, Ohio Realtors, the County Auditors' Association and others.

This legislation would, in summary, do the following:

- Require county recorders, auditors, and engineers in charge of the tax map department to make an electronic recording process available for conveyances by June 30th, 2026.
- Require recorders to make available to the public on the internet electronic indexes and electronic documents dating back to January 1, 1980, with the exception of veteran discharge papers as those are not considered public record
- Create a document preservation surcharge of \$5.00 directed to the county general fund intended to support the preservation and digitization of documents and ongoing costs incurred by the county recorder's office in making such digital records publicly available
- Appropriate \$6 million in one-time GRF appropriation for back-scanning for counties that currently do not meet the mandate of imaging back to 1980.
- An amendment was added in Senate committee to ensure that only counties who had not yet done the work of modernizing their documents could seek funds.

- An amendment was also added in the Senate at the request of the Ohio Department of Natural resources that would allow ODNR resource officers and wildlife officers to have abandoned automobiles towed so the burden does not fall solely on local law enforcement.

Senate Bill 94 will continue to promote commerce in Ohio by allowing transactions to occur electronically in all of Ohio's 88 counties, bringing a baseline of electronically accessible records going back to 1980. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on SB 94. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.