



STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER OHIO.

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

House Finance Committee

HB 349-Proponent Testimony (Written Only)

June 25, 2024

James Kennedy

Policy Analyst

Good afternoon, Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on House Bill 349.

CCAO recognizes the positive economic effects from the creation of the EnergizeOhio program. The bill permits the establishment of “EnergizeOhio zones,” which will be locally designated areas that will benefit from loan programs and accelerated depreciation. These tools will allow local communities to lower the cost of investment through the abatement of local taxes. Some areas in Ohio, particularly western Ohio lack the adequate capacity of natural gas. Additionally, southeast Ohio maintains abundant supplies of natural gas, however the region lacks the distribution pipelines and other needed infrastructure to access these natural resources. The EnergizeOhio program will be a major economic development tool for counties throughout Ohio but will have a monumental positive impact in southeastern Ohio.

This program will provide a \$20 million appropriation to create the EnergizeOhio Loan Program which assists the revitalization of abandoned worksites that now will create additional jobs and enhance the economic activity of the region. We also believe this program will provide necessary incentives to attract industrial and manufacturing firms to the region that would otherwise overlook southeastern Ohio. Within the House Economic & Workforce Development Committee the bill was amended to allow Counties, Townships, and Municipalities to partially exempt natural gas personal property that is placed within an EnergizeOhio zone. The local government will have the flexibility to place a partial exemption from 25%-75% through the passing of a local resolution.



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The economic incentives will also be used to access natural gas which is vital for the expansion of housing in areas that would have otherwise have the inability to build additional housing. For many counties having access to natural gas is the last piece in economic development and job creation.

CCAO believes this bill is necessary if we are serious about expanding economic development and activity in areas such as southeastern Ohio amongst others. CCAO is happy to provide proponent testimony on HB 349 and would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony.



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