



OHIO HOUSE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Written Proponent Testimony House Bill 499

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony regarding the Ohio Municipal League's position on House Bill 499, legislation to create a grant program for municipalities and townships to receive further funding to increase the state's housing supply.

OML represents more than 730 municipalities. Our membership is a diverse array of communities from the largest Ohio cities down to villages of under 100 residents. Every community has its own unique character, culture, and challenges, including a wide variety of challenges related to housing.

From a municipal perspective, this issue – to a great extent – comes down to the resources that are available. This includes not having enough staff – especially staff with sufficient knowledge of development and zoning – or not having adequate financial resources to contract with those who have this expertise.

House Bill 499 is geared toward providing incentives for local governments to further address the state's housing supply shortage – rather than mandates. We appreciate this aspect of the bill because it provides for both flexibility and local decision-making.

The legislation would allow for municipalities to receive funding through a newly created grant program at the Ohio Housing Finance Agency. The funding would be available after the local governments have adopted and implemented at least three housing policies from a menu of 12 available options. Communities that adopt at least six policies would be eligible for more funding, and all the grant funding would be used to further address housing challenges. The legislation also expands community reinvestment areas (CRAs) for residential construction near mega projects.

We appreciate Rep. Mathews and Rep. Isaacsohn for sponsoring this legislation and the incentivized approach on which the bill is based. We are grateful to this committee for its work to address Ohio's housing crisis and urge for the passage of this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 499.

Kent Scarrett
Executive Director
Ohio Municipal League