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House Bill 315 Township Omnibus Bill

Proponent Testimony

May 21, 2024

House State and Local Government Committee

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Kyle Brooks, and I am the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Ohio Township Association (OTA). I appreciate the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 315, better known as the township omnibus bill.

I would like to provide clarifying information on one provision of the bill, New Community Authorities, and provide information on the proposed amendment AM 1838 dealing with Community Host Fees.

Allow Large Urban Townships to Utilize New Community Authorities (NCA)

Recently enacted legislation (HB 33) authorizes a board of township trustees in a township with at least 5,000 people and in a county with a population of at least 200,000 and not more than 400,000 people to form a new community authority or delete territory from an existing new community district that is entirely within the unincorporated territory of the township, rather than giving the county commissioners that authority. HB 315 will expand this permissive authority to large urban townships, which have a population of at least 15,000 in the unincorporated territory and have adopted limited home rule pursuant to R.C. Ch. 504. This will only impact 12 townships in the state, 6 of which are in Hamilton County.

A new community authority is a development tool that allows for economic growth within a subdivision. First, a developer or landowner **MUST** petition to be included in the NCA – no land owner can be forced into the NCA. From there, those developers can be charged a “development charge” that goes directly back into the area of the NCA. This is fully transparent as the developer had to ask to be in the NCA, and the charge must be told up front to the landowners petitioning.

Unlike a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF), NCA’s are a “pay as you go” system. Those included in the NCA agree to pay a development charge to help build up the area with infrastructure such as sidewalks, water and sewer lines, and paved roads. In a TIF the rest of the residents pick up the tab to pay for those things as the developer does not pay taxes for X number of years. In the case of an NCA only the developers/land owners are paying for those improvements and not levied among all property owners.

The OTA opposes the addition of AM 1953 to HB 315, which removes the provision of NCA, and a vital economic development tool in the State’s larger townships.

Community Host Fee (AM 1838)

The proposed amendment to HB 315 is a provision to allow a township to initiate a community host fee if the township has a venue that is owned by a **non-profit and has a capacity of 2,000 or more**. If such a venue exists, the township **may**, by a unanimous vote of the trustees, institute a \$1 ticket fee to a ticket that is over \$10. The revenue generated from this nominal fee **must** be deposited into the Fire/EMS fund. This provision stems from Riverbend music venue near the Cincinnati area where most of the venue is located in Anderson Township. Anderson is responsible for the emergency personnel staffing and

Fire/EMS runs to the venue during a concert or event. Anderson has done nearly 70 Fire/EMS runs to Riverbend Music Center in the last two years. The Anderson Township Fire and Rescue Department has a standing policy to put on an extra 2-person medic unit, to lessen the impact on its ability to provide services to Anderson Township and the Village of Newtown which it also serves (pop 2,700). There have been a couple of times when the Department has also staffed a backup engine with two personnel on overtime due to the type of concert. The Township's cost per response is \$2,078. It is estimated that the cost incurred by Anderson Township taxpayers is \$2,078-\$4,000 per concert due to extra staffing as explained above. As a non-profit Riverbend does not pay property taxes and is receiving these services for free. For reference of population, Anderson Township has a population of 44,088 and during sold out Riverbend concerts, Anderson's population increases by 46.5%.

This \$1 ticket fee will defray the costs of the Fire and EMS runs townships must make to these types of venues. Municipalities may charge a 5% ticket fee on similar venues without proposing it to the electors.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify. HB 315 has had no opponents to the bill, and we ask for your affirmative vote on the AM 1838 Community Host Fee amendment and the bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you or committee members may have.