



OHIO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
April 23, 2024

Written Opponent Testimony
House Bill 280

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written opponent testimony regarding the Ohio Municipal League's opposition to House Bill 280.

This legislation makes a number of changes regarding lead abatement, and the league and its members are in favor of efforts to remove toxic lead from homes where it poses a danger. But the concern to our member municipalities is the provision in this bill that would punish cities and villages with the threat of significantly decreasing their Local Government Fund (LGF) distribution payments if they do not meet arbitrary time limits.

The league is concerned that HB280 is the latest legislative proposal which is quickly becoming a trend in state policy initiatives of legislation that acts to intimidate our members by taking away Local Government Fund (LGF) distributions as a form of penalty. Universally, our members believe the relationship between the state and municipalities would be far more productive if it were more of a partnership rather proposals meant to intimidate and punish.

LGF funding is essential to ensure the safety and security of communities through the sustainable funding of police and fire, to provide critical infrastructure such as reliable roadways and clean water systems, to support basic services such as snow removal and trash collection, and to provide for community improvements including parks and brownfield remediation. And that is only the short list of municipal services and responsibilities.

Maybe of more importance to the members of the Ohio House Ways and Means committee is that reliable and effective LGF distributions provide much needed relief to Ohio's municipal taxpayers, who are shielded to a degree from the encroachment of rising municipal income tax rates, to meet the evolving fiscal challenges of the communities in which they work and live. This important financial partnership is a benefit not only to the operations of Ohio's hometowns, but it is also an important asset to Ohio's municipal taxpayers.

It is important to recognize that over 80% of Ohio's business activities and success occur in our municipalities and that your municipal partners are truly the economic engines of the state of Ohio.

Under the current bill, municipalities and other governments that require a certification indicating that a property is safe from lead hazards for rental registration would have to issue or deny the certification within 30 days from receiving the application, or face the penalty of the LGF reduction – up to as much as a 20% reduction.

Withholding LGF funds – especially based on a short time frame – remains a deep concern for our members. Municipalities are already facing a variety of disruptions and challenges to their revenue streams. These disruptions include overruns due to inflationary pressures that continue to lead to significant increases in project and contracting costs. Our members continue to experience challenges related to unstable revenue collection resulting from the shift to more Ohioans working from home because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the overall economy continues to struggle to recover, and Ohio municipalities, like other employers, face the same challenges in attracting and retaining employees.

It is critical that services of municipalities are not hindered by putting their LGF funding at risk through this legislation and legislation like it, and we therefore urge for your opposition to this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 280.



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