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OHIO SENATE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

PROPONENT TESTIMONY (WRITTEN ONLY) – SENATE BILL 286

December 10, 2024

James Kennedy
Policy Analyst

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony for Senate Bill 286. CCAO thanks the sponsor, Senator Wilkin for bringing the bill forward. CCAO enthusiastically supports the creation of an Ohio River Commission within the Department of Development. The Ohio River is one of the state's most important transportation and economic development assets, but the state needs a more coordinated approach to maximize the region's potential. CCAO supports the creation of an Ohio River Commission, with public and private members appointed by the governor, to raise the profile of development opportunities and facilitate the partnerships needed to lead to long-term success.

Under the bill, the commission's 11 members will have the ability to develop and promote economic development, marine cargo terminal operations, and travel and tourism on the Ohio river and its tributaries. The commission will develop a master plan for the development of Ohio River transportation and infrastructure projects, which is vital to coordinating the activities of regional and local planning organizations, state agencies, and private entities along the river. Also, the commission will be able to apply for and coordinate the distribution of federal grant and loan funding to carry out these plans. The establish of the Ohio River Commission is an essential step in maximizing the economic development potential of counties along the Ohio River. CCAO asks the committee to favorably report Senate Bill 286.

