

**Matt McCollister, One Columbus**

Proponent Testimony – December 12, 2023  
Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee

Chairman Reineke, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, my name is Matt McCollister and I serve as Executive Vice President of One Columbus, the regional economic development organization for the 11 counties of Central Ohio.

I have more than 25 years of experience in economic development. I started my career at the Zanesville-Muskingum Chamber of Commerce and have served the Columbus region for more than 20 years.

In my role with One Columbus, I oversee an initiative called Prepared Communities Win. We engage with our local economic development organizations and their stakeholders to ensure they have sites and buildings ready so that they can retain and attract job creating projects and strengthen their local tax base.

Our experience tells us that Ohio's competitiveness is directly correlated with how proactive and prepared we are locally. That's why I am testifying today in support of House Bill 201. This bill would enable the proactive extension of natural gas infrastructure to potential sites and land planned for future industrial growth.

The industrial sector has driven Ohio's extensive growth over the past few years and continues to be the source of the majority of our opportunities. Manufacturing projects create excellent jobs, but securing these projects requires us to proactively develop industrial scale infrastructure and capacity. Because of Ohio's success, many of the most prepared sites and buildings have been taken. In response, this bill will open up more sites for investment, ultimately making us more competitive for future opportunities that will strengthen and diversify Ohio's economy.

Thank you for your time this morning and I would be happy to answer any questions during the panel discussion.