



Senate Finance Committee
Senate Joint Resolution 4
Proponent Testimony
(Written)
November 19, 2024

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, and Ranking Member Sykes, and members of Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony regarding Senate Joint Resolution 4 (S.J.R. 4), which poses a statewide ballot issue to continue the issuance of bonds for the Ohio Public Works Commission. The Ohio Rural Development Alliance (ORDA) supports S.J.R. 4.

By way of background, ORDA is an organization of Ohio's four Local Development Districts (LDDs) and other entities, such as regional transportation planning organization (RTPOs) dedicated to economic parity for Ohio's rural communities. These entities support development for each of the communities they serve. Ohio's LDDs serve the 32 counties in Ohio's Appalachian region, which stretches south along the Ohio River and as far north as Lake Erie, while our RTPOs provide needed planning and project management consulting for our communities that do not fall under the purview of one of our state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Many of ORDA's members help their member communities plan for infrastructure projects and assist in the identification of funds to help complete infrastructure projects.

The Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) is unique among state and federal infrastructure programs in that the project selection process is highly community-driven. OPWC supports a wide array of infrastructure projects such as transportation and critical water and sewer projects. Rural communities, whose infrastructure is in need of significant improvement, can struggle to find funds to support key infrastructure projects and properly plan out projects of substantial size. Without access to funds through OPWC, rural communities would not be able to begin and complete key projects. The dollars provided through the State Capital Improvement Program are important access points for rural communities in Ohio. If this program were to sunset as scheduled now on July 1, 2025, imperative water and other infrastructure projects would not be able to be completed in the coming years. Access to essential services, like water, is not only important to public health, but drives development in the rural regions of Ohio. The ability to improve infrastructure will assist in bringing rural communities in parity with the rest of Ohio. ORDA fully supports Senate Joint Resolution 4 to continue investing in Ohio's communities and we urge its passage.