



June 26, 2024

The Honorable Kristina Roegner
Chairwoman, Senate Government Oversight Committee
Senate Building, 142
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Written Proponent Testimony – HB 257

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on HB 257, which would allow certain governmental entities to conduct business virtually. My name is John Albers, and I represent the Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts (CORD), a non-profit association established in 2005 meant to assist, protect and advance the interests of Ohio's Regional Water and Sewer Districts, also known as "6119 Districts". 6119 districts are political subdivisions under Ohio Revised Code. There are roughly 100 Districts in the state, providing millions of Ohioans potable water, sanitary sewer and/or stormwater services.

CORD is a strong proponent of HB 257, which would allow certain governmental entities, including 6119 districts, to meet virtually in some cases. As you have likely heard from other proponents on this bill, we feel HB 257 would make meeting quorum requirements significantly easier for our member districts and allow certain decisions to be made using virtual means. This flexibility will bring vast improvements to decision making processes, and help government move at the speed of business – something that our customers expect and demand.

By allowing virtual means to be used in certain cases, HB 257 also provides citizens with much greater access to their local governments. Citizens will now be able to interact with their local government from the convenience and comfort of their homes, with minimal interruption to their daily routines. As well, the guardrails that were added into HB 257 through the committee process ensure that no citizen will be denied the opportunity to participate in the normal course of business, and ensure that only "non-major routine" expenses can be conducted virtually.

We greatly appreciate the General Assembly's willingness to embrace these changes. We feel that HB 257 will make government run more effectively, efficiently, and improve public participation. We respectfully request the passage of this bill as soon as possible, and we appreciate the opportunity to express our support. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Albers
Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts