



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

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**House Bill 315
Proponent Testimony
November 19, 2024
Senate Local Government Committee
William Murdock , MORPC Executive Director**

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the Senate Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 315. My name is William Murdock, and I serve as the Executive Director at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC).

MORPC is a regional planning organization and council representing 90 local governments and partner organizations across 15 counties in Central Ohio. Our members reflect the diversity of Ohio's communities—urban, suburban, and rural—and serve as a microcosm of the state. We deliver programs, services, and funding in transportation, land use, data, sustainability, and economic development.

House Bill 315 contains many provisions with implications for townships, but one stands out: the \$3 million appropriation for a Housing Technical Assistance Grant program at the Ohio Department of Development. Last year, MORPC, alongside local government leaders from across the region, advocated for this appropriation before the Senate Select Committee on Housing. We are grateful to Senator Reynolds and the committee for recognizing its importance and incorporating it into their report.

At MORPC, our work on Central Ohio's housing challenges touches both the local and regional levels and urban, suburban, and rural communities. Each community is facing distinct land use and planning challenges whether it's growth, economic development, staffing pressures, or speed to market. How we address these challenges today will define our region for decades to come.

For many communities—particularly rural ones—limited resources often restrict their ability to seize opportunities or tackle complex housing and planning needs. MORPC has proactively addressed this gap through our "planner pool" program, which allows our staff to temporarily assist communities with planning efforts, zoning, or economic development initiatives. Over two dozen communities in our region have sought and received help, but our assistance is constrained, especially in smaller communities without resources to scale up to address urgent housing needs or economic development pressures. With additional funding like the Housing Technical Assistance Grant, communities across Ohio would have greater flexibility to meet their specific needs. This investment would enable shared resources across communities and empower communities to pursue responsible, affordable housing growth more quickly.

William Murdock, AICP
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Chair

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Vice Chair

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Secretary



Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member DeMora, and committee members, thank you again for your consideration of House Bill 315. I welcome any questions you may have about my testimony or MORPC's work. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at wmurdock@morpc.org.

