



Ohio General Assembly
House of Representatives
Columbus

State Representative Mike Dovilla
District 17

State Representative Nick Santucci
District 64

House Bill 138 – Sponsor Testimony
Before the House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee
Tuesday, April 1, 2025

Chairwoman Miller, Vice Chairman Hiner, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on H.B. 138, legislation that would authorize the creation of tourism promotion districts (TPD) in the State of Ohio.

The TPD mechanism empowers the tourism industry to establish a self-funded revenue stream with local government oversight and support with no cost to local and state governments. The concept has been widely embraced as a supplemental funding tool in effort to bolster overnight visitation. Across the United States, there are currently 218 TPDs in 23 states, and four other states currently have similar bills pending in their legislatures. These include our neighbors to the east and west, Pennsylvania and Indiana. Seven states recently passed TPD legislation, including Illinois and Minnesota here in the Midwest. TPDs are a proven source of stable, dedicated funding for tourism promotion. Moreover, they do not require any additional general fund dollars from the state or local governments, as TPD funds are raised through a pass-through assessment to visitors.

With specific regard to the bill, we would highlight the following provisions for the Committee's consideration. H.B. 138:

- is permissive legislation that does not compel municipalities or counties or businesses to implement its provisions;
- enables cities, towns, and counties to create a TPD;
- creates an industry led funding mechanism to support tourism promotion activities with authorized services including marketing, sales activities, and events;
- provides a process for forming a district requiring a written plan developed by hotel owners;
- includes a protest procedure through which hotel owners must approve passage of a local ordinance to form the TPD;
- authorizes business assessments on tourism businesses with assessments calculated based on the benefit to the assessed business and collection procedures defined by the district plan and ordinance;
- and allows for tourism non-profits to be a district's management entity with term limits for board members.

Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before the Committee. We would be happy to answer any questions members may have at this time.

###