



Date: April 29, 2025

Cleveland Marriott Downtown at Key Tower
1360 West Mall Drive
Cleveland, OH 44114
216-696-9200

Proponent Testimony on House Bill 138

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 proponent testimony on House Bill 138—the bill that would authorize the creation of Tourism Promotion Districts (TPDs) in Ohio.

My name is Bob Megazzini, and I serve as the General Manager of the Cleveland Marriott Downtown at Key Tower. First, I would like to thank Representatives Dovilla and Santucci for introducing this important legislation.

HB 138 provides a critical tool for Cleveland's tourism economy to remain competitive in an increasingly crowded national and international market. This legislation would empower cities like Cleveland—home to world-class cultural institutions, professional sports teams, and a vibrant lakefront—to create a Tourism Promotion District that reinvests directly into the local visitor economy.

Specifically, HB 138 allows a local community, at the request of its hotel industry, to establish a TPD tailored to its unique needs. Under this bill, hotels such as ours in downtown Cleveland would help define the district's boundaries, determine the funding mechanisms, and decide how the funds should be reinvested—whether in tourism marketing, special events, or enhancements that attract overnight visitors.

It's important to note that Ohio would not be breaking new ground with this initiative. Tourism Promotion Districts are a proven, effective tool already in use in more than 200 communities across 23 states. They create a self-funded revenue stream through a pass-through assessment on visitors—not taxpayers—with strong local control and industry participation built into the process.

This bill brings together local governments and tourism-related businesses to develop a district plan and determine whether a TPD is the right fit for their community. It requires buy-in from the affected businesses and includes important oversight provisions to ensure transparency and accountability.

For organizations like ours, simply having the ability to explore this tool when the time is right is incredibly valuable. HB 138 provides communities the flexibility and support needed to position not only our hometown of Cleveland—but all of Ohio—as a premier destination. More visitors mean more events, more economic opportunity, and stronger downtowns and venues across the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today and for your thoughtful consideration of this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Megazzini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bob Megazzini

General Manager Cleveland Marriott Downtown at Key Tower