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June 18, 2025

Chairman Jim Hoops
Ohio Development Committee
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Proponent Testimony on House Bill 284

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chairman Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today as a proponent of House Bill 284. My name is Kevin Schmidt and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Cast Metals Association (OCMA), representing foundries and suppliers across Ohio since 1991.

On behalf of our members, I strongly support House Bill 284, which extends the requirement for state-funded projects to use U.S.-produced iron alongside existing mandates for U.S.-produced steel, expands the scope to infrastructure and utility projects, and ensures compliance by state institutions of higher education. This legislation strengthens Ohio's cast metals industry, promotes economic growth, and secures jobs.

HB 284 directly benefits the cast metals industry in Ohio who produce high-quality iron castings for automotive, aerospace, and infrastructure sectors. By mandating U.S.-produced iron in state-funded projects—like water works, sewage disposal, and university construction—this bill ensures a level playing field for our foundries, mirroring the protections Ohio's steel industry has long enjoyed under laws like R.C. 153.011. This alignment fosters fair competition against foreign imports, which often undercut domestic producers.

By prioritizing U.S.-produced iron, this bill will increase demand for our Ohio's manufactured products, enabling investments in technology and workforce expansion. For example, states like Pennsylvania have boosted their foundry sectors through similar domestic sourcing policies, and Ohio can achieve comparable gains, with tax revenues supporting the state and local communities.

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Second, the bill enhances regulatory consistency. Extending the steel industry's Buy America-style requirements to iron ensures that state-funded projects, from bridges to water systems, use domestically sourced materials. The Director of Administrative Services' rules, aligned with federal standards like the Safe Drinking Water Act, will streamline compliance, while the Director of Transportation's exemption for bridge projects ensures flexibility without compromising intent.

OCMA has advocated for policies like HB 284 for decades and are pleased to see this legislation targeting US based iron products. We urge the committee to support HB 284 to strengthen Ohio's cast metals industry, align it with steel industry protections, and promote economic vitality. Thank you for your consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kevin Schmidt
Executive Director, Ohio Cast Metals Association

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