

**Written Testimony of Rick Platt to the
Ohio House Development Committee
concerning opponent testimony H.B. 147
Wednesday, February 25, 2026**

Port authorities are uniquely equipped to serve as vehicles to advance public-private partnerships which yield positive results favoring job creation in Ohio. Though there's not much alike among the 60+ ports in Ohio, the ability to act as a nimble, business-friendly government is common amongst us all.

In the last 25 years, the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority has undertaken over \$1.2 billion financing-related projects creating jobs, primarily in manufacturing. We've turned a former Air Force Base into a development anchor with more jobs than existed when it closed as a base. We've either built or incentivized the building of 14 speculative industrial buildings in the last 14 years. Our focus on incentivizing manufacturing job creating projects has seen jobs on our development property grow 150% in the last 10 years.

H.B. 147 could harm our continued success. For one, it would zap our negotiation power in the financing aspect of the transactions we undertake. It would dictate the terms rather than allow the art of the deal.

For example, our Port Authority has made it a best practice to negotiate a public benefit component of the transactions. Through negotiations, we ensure that not all of the sales tax savings automatically accrue to the developer. In fact, since its inception, more than \$15 million has been redirected to public infrastructure investments on the projects we've financed.

We often are asked how we can help smaller companies, not just large ones. H.B. 147 would only further tilt the transactions toward bigger deals.

It's not hard to imagine a scenario, should H.B. 147 become law, where a million dollar condo is being exempted from taxes and being built next to an existing housing development where mom and pop are paying sales taxes for new siding on their house or a new roof.

With back-and-forth of negotiations, we have been able to offset the differences where benefits don't work for smaller transactions. A multi-family development we are negotiating right now would ensure rents that fit the housing needs for our workforce and also make payments in lieu of taxes which will be directed to future, smaller transactions for workforce housing.

H.B. 147 would dictate terms in these transactions and, thus, tends to remove local port authority negotiating power.

There's a key principle at play—government is best which is closest to the people. H.B. 147 does not embrace that principle. Port authorities know their local development standards and goals for local development.

Nothing can replace that local development knowledge and expertise. Local port authorities know where exemptions make sense and, just as importantly, where they don't.