



**Written Testimony in Opposition of Sub HB 147**

House Development Committee

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chairman Lorenz, Ranking Member Brownlee, and Honorable Members of the House Development Committee, thank you for accepting my written testimony in opposition to Sub HB 147 on behalf of Cuyahoga County. My name is Debbie Berry, Deputy Chief of Staff for Integrated Development for Cuyahoga County.

Cuyahoga County is home to one of Ohio's most vibrant regional economies. Our port authority's maritime operations alone move approximately 13 million tons of cargo annually, support more than 20,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs, and generate roughly \$7 billion in total economic impact. Beyond maritime commerce, port-supported financing tools have helped leverage billions of dollars in private development across industrial, manufacturing, commercial, and mix-used sectors over the past decade. These decisions are made locally, by a board appointed by the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. This local accountability is central to our success and is exactly what Sub HB 147 puts at risk.

Under the substitute bill, developers would be allowed to bypass local port authority review entirely, taking proposals to the Ohio Tax Credit Authority if an agreement is not reached within 30 days. This turns a negotiated public incentive into a near-automatic state entitlement, removing the local judgement that weighs direct public impact. The \$25 million construction threshold further tilts the playing field toward large scale projects, which could leave out many of Cuyahoga County's most impactful investments, including adaptive reuse, neighborhood commercial redevelopment, and industrial modernization. Also, this bill as currently written caps port authority fees in ways that undermine the funding for project oversight, compliance, and community reinvestment.

Cuyahoga County strongly supports economic growth and private investment. We believe Ohio's port authority model works because it keeps the decision making local and tied to positive regional and community outcomes. Sub HB 147 as written disrupts that accountability, we respectfully urge this Committee to vote no on current Sub HB 147. Thank you again, Chairman Hoops, Vice Chairman Lorenz, Ranking Member Brownlee and the members of the House Development Committee.