



February 24, 2026

Ohio House of Representatives
Development Committee
Hon. James Hoops, Chair
Hon. Brian Lorenz, Vice Chair
Hon. Karen Brownlee, Ranking Member
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Opponent Testimony – Substitute House Bill 147 (Lorenz)

Dear Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Brownlee, and Members of the House Development Committee:

My name is Samuel L. Brady, and I serve as President and CEO of the Jackson County Economic Development Partnership, as well as Chairman of the Joint Economic Development Initiative of Southern Ohio (JEDISO), representing the counties of Jackson, Pike, Ross, and Scioto. Our region is served by three port authorities directly impacted by Substitute House Bill 147: the Jackson County Port Authority, the Ross County Port Authority, and the Southern Ohio Port Authority.

On behalf of our organizations, and in strong concurrence with the Ohio Council of Port Authorities, I respectfully submit this testimony in firm opposition to Substitute House Bill 147. Port authorities are indispensable economic development partners across Ohio. Their role in disciplined public finance, project structuring, and stewardship of public resources cannot be overstated. In southern Ohio where communities are frequently competing for capital investment, workforce opportunities, and long-term economic stability port authorities often serve as the critical bridge between private sector ambition and responsible public policy. Their involvement ensures that development incentives are strategically aligned, fiscally sound, and responsive to local priorities.

Sub. H.B. 147 would undermine this framework by allowing developers to bypass port authorities entirely if an agreement is not executed within an arbitrary 30-day window. Complex economic development transactions require careful due diligence, financial modeling, legal review, incentive coordination, and alignment with local and regional development strategies. These processes exist to protect taxpayers, safeguard public investments, and ensure projects deliver long-term economic value. A statutory 30-day deadline is neither realistic nor responsible.

By permitting developers to seek sales tax exemptions directly from the Ohio Tax Credit Authority (TCA) under such circumstances, the bill weakens meaningful local review and erodes the collaborative process that has historically ensured sound economic development outcomes. The result would be rushed decisions, diminished fiscal accountability, and a heightened risk of poorly structured incentive packages.

The bill's threshold of \$25 million in construction costs further broadens its scope in ways that were likely unintended. Most large-scale development projects involve commitments to public infrastructure improvements through development agreements, building permits, or Tax Increment Financing (TIF). In such cases, public infrastructure is typically financed through established public mechanisms, not direct private capital. Sub. H.B. 147 fails to adequately distinguish between these funding structures, creating a pathway that circumvents local oversight while duplicating or conflicting with existing public incentive frameworks.

Port authorities bring consistency, experience, and fiscal discipline to economic development transactions. While individual deals may vary, the statutory framework and professional standards applied by port authorities remain consistent statewide. Differences in outcomes reflect the unique circumstances of each project, not a lack of structure or accountability. Removing port authorities from this process diminishes the quality of project review and weakens the public interest safeguards that Ohio taxpayers rely upon.

For southern Ohio in particular, where strategic economic development tools are essential to reversing decades of industrial decline, this bill threatens to destabilize a proven and effective system. Port authorities are not obstacles to development; they are facilitators of responsible growth.

For these reasons, and in full support of the Ohio Council of Port Authorities, I respectfully urge the Committee to reject Substitute House Bill 147.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Samuel L. Brady
President & CEO
Jackson County Economic Development Partnership

Chairman
Joint Economic Development Initiative of Southern Ohio (JEDISO)
Representing Jackson, Pike, Ross, and Scioto Counties

CC: File