

House Finance Committee  
Interested Party Testimony, Sub. House Bill 96 (Stewart)  
Jason Warner, Director of Strategic Engagement, Greater Ohio Policy Center  
Thursday, April 3, 2025

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present Interested Party Testimony on Sub. House Bill 96 (Sub. HB96), the main operating budget for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 on behalf of the Greater Ohio Policy Center.

GOPC appreciates the work that the House of Representatives and the Finance Committee has devoted to preparing the substitute version of House Bill 96. After reviewing the provisions included in the bill, we wish to provide the committee with the following comments and feedback on the most important issues to our organization.

***Thank You for Re-Funding Brownfield Remediation Program***

As the legislature has done over the past four years, Sub. HB96 continues to demonstrate strong commitment to the ongoing revitalization and redevelopment of brownfield sites by providing a new allocation of funding to the **Brownfield Remediation Program (BRP)**.

***We Request One Amendment to Improve Program and Increase Impact***

However, we continue to believe that the “first come first served” policy of the existing BRP does not adequately serve all of Ohio’s counties and their communities.

That is why we **ask for your favorable consideration of the inclusion of HC\_136\_2089 as a part of the omnibus amendment to Sub. HB96**. This amendment

- Ensures no county could receive more than 20% of competitive funds in any given application period;
- Reserves at least 25% of program funds for projects that have a designated end use;
- Expedites the review and issuance of award notifications by the Department of Development.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this amendment language.

***Thank You for Maintaining Public Transportation Funding***

We appreciate the legislature’s decision to maintain level funding for public transportation systems. Thank you for maintaining this commitment.

### ***Thank You for Continuing to Support Welcome Home Ohio***

We appreciate the legislature's decision to slightly increase funding to the Welcome Home Ohio program, along with the important changes made which will greatly enhance the programs operation. This has been an important program in developing the workforce housing critically needed across Ohio.

### ***Conclusion***

Chair Stewart and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you again for your leadership on these issues. I appreciate the opportunity to provide interested party testimony and for GOPC to share our views on what it will take to create the tools and policy environment Ohio needs to thrive in the years to come.