

Finance

Energy

Public Safety



Thomas Hall
State Representative

May 28th, 2025

Rep. Hall HB 274 Sponsor Testimony

Chair King, Vice Chair Kishman, and Ranking Member Sims, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 274, a vital and creative approach to addressing two serious concerns in the emergency service industry.

My joint sponsor already addressed the need to make sure every jurisdiction has EMS service. My focus will be on the creation of joint fire districts throughout our state. Governor DeWine through his volunteer task force, has spoken at length about prioritizing EMS service and with this focus on extended emergency response time we are primed to address the issue.

There is an alarming trend – not just in Ohio but across the country – of people not signing up to volunteer for critical community services. The reasons are numerous: busy schedules, full time jobs, family responsibilities, and more. It is due to these shortages that many across Ohio are at risk of being left waiting for fire or EMS services. With all that in mind we present this legislation to you today. House Bill 274 is a creative approach to “stop the bleeding” of increased response times that have plagued communities across our state.

House Bill 274 would establish the fire and EMS shared services reimbursement grant program. This program would be housed under the state fire marshal’s office. A township or municipal corporation would be eligible to receive a grant if on or after January 1, 2026, the township or municipal corporation joins a new or existing district or enters a new contract for joint services with another. Eligible Townships or municipal corporations would apply independently and receive one grant to reimburse 50% of its eligible expenses up to \$100,000. We have also include that a township or municipal corporation must apply for the grant during its second year of participating in the joint services. The bill analysis provides an example of this. Additionally, the language also states the grants are subject to the

availability of funds and at this current time, the bill does not include an appropriation.

Chair King and members of the House Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 274. We would be happy to take any questions from members of the committee at this time.