

Coshocton County Commissioners



Board of Commissioners

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OHRWays and Means Committee

Re: House Bill 335

We are writing to express our strong concerns regarding the potential elimination of inside millage, as discussed in recent legislative proposals and highlighted in the Legislative Service Commission's report.

The inside millage provides Coshocton County with a stable, annually recurring revenue source that is essential to supporting the core functions of our General Government Operations, Court System, Justice Services, and Elections. For the upcoming year, Coshocton County anticipates only \$15 million in revenue to fund a \$19.7 million General Fund budget. This shortfall has historically been managed through our carryover balance, but that balance is not unlimited.

The loss of \$2.7 million in inside millage revenue would be devastating to our operations. We would be forced to reduce public safety services, implement deep departmental budget cuts, lay off essential staff, and indefinitely postpone critical capital improvement projects. Eighty percent of our General Fund budget is dedicated to employee wages; if these cuts were made, more than 30 employees—representing approximately 21% of our workforce of 161—would lose their jobs. In addition to the operational impacts, the county would also be responsible for covering unemployment compensation costs for the laid-off employees, placing further strain on our limited financial resources.

Compounding this issue, our Courts possess the authority to court-order their budgets—currently over \$2.5 million—resulting in disproportionate cuts to smaller departments and essential services.

Eliminating this foundational revenue stream would also compromise our ability to service existing debt. We currently allocate \$250,000 annually toward debt obligations. Without the ability to support future capital improvement loans with inside millage, vital infrastructure investments simply would not occur.

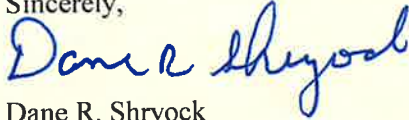
In the absence of inside millage, our only recourse would be to seek new sources of revenue. However, this path is deeply uncertain. Historically, Coshocton County voters have not supported additional sales tax increases, and most levy proposals are typically defeated at the

ballot box. We are not optimistic that voters would support a sales tax increase—even if it were offset by a property tax decrease.

In short, the elimination of inside millage would significantly undermine Coshocton County's ability to provide essential services, maintain staff levels, and plan for the future. We urge you to consider the severe financial implications this change would impose on counties like ours.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued service to the people of Ohio.

Sincerely,



Dane R. Shryock



Robert W. Bigrigg



Gary L. Fischer