

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 11/2/25

Name: Doug White

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: Former President of Ohio Senate, Former Director Ohio Department of Commerce

Address: 3830 Old Dutch Rd

City: Manchester State: OH Zip: 45144

Best Contact Telephone: 614-582-0530 Email: _____

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB540

Specific Issue: Payment in Lieu of Taxes

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? Written Only

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online

Hon. Doug White
Former Ohio Senate President
Former Director of the Ohio Department of Commerce

Chair Roemer, Vice-Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy and members of the committee,

As a lifelong resident of Adams County, former Senate President, farmer, and someone who's spent much of his life serving this state, I want to express my full support for House Bill 540. I know what it means for a small community to carry a big load, and that's exactly what's happening across our Appalachian counties right now.

When large conservation organizations buy up tens of thousands of acres of land and remove it from the tax rolls, the cost doesn't disappear, it just gets pushed onto the people who remain. The township still has to plow and repair the roads, replace culverts, and maintain access for emergency services. Those expenses fall on local farmers, homeowners, and small businesses who are already paying more than their fair share.

Preserving the natural beauty of Adams County is important, and we all value our forests and wildlife. But there's a difference between being a steward of the land and being a corporate landholder. When an organization owns over 20,000 acres, benefits from state grants and taxpayer-funded bonds, and even earns revenue through programs like carbon credits or conservation deals, it's not unreasonable to ask them to contribute a modest payment back to the communities that make their work possible.

House Bill 540 is about fairness, responsibility, and respect for the rural townships that keep these lands accessible and safe. Everyone who benefits from the land ought to help take care of it.

This bill is long overdue.

Sincerely,

Doug White
Former President
Ohio Senate

