

May 23, 2025

Dear Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on FY2026-27 State Operating Budget and specifically amendment SC 0197.

My name is David Dunn, and I serve as Board Chair of Shores & Islands Ohio and a private club manager. I am proud to represent both a historic tourism destination and a regional organization that has helped elevate the visibility and success of one of Ohio's most visited regions.

Amendment SC 0197 raises significant concerns. It proposes to redirect lodging tax revenues away from our Convention and Visitors Bureau—Shores & Islands Ohio—without requiring local transparency or stakeholder engagement. This threatens the foundation on which much of our regional success has been built.

Many of our partners in the tourism industry—hoteliers, restaurateurs, attraction operators, and hospitality investors—have made personal, long-term investments into this region with the expectation that a strong, capable destination marketing organization would be in place to support and promote their efforts. Shores & Islands Ohio has consistently delivered on that promise.

Our work crosses county lines and reflects the spirit of collaboration that has defined our region. When we spotlight Shores & Islands Ohio, we are not just lifting up Erie and Ottawa Counties—we are showcasing Ohio's tourism brand on a national and international stage. To place that promotion in jeopardy is to risk both local prosperity and the broader appeal of Ohio as a destination.

Tourism has helped create jobs, sustain public services, and improve quality of life across our communities. The momentum we have built is not accidental—it is the result of coordinated and consistent investment. That progress must not be undone by a rushed or opaque legislative change.

I urge you to oppose SC 0197 and support a transparent and collaborative approach to tourism funding. Let us continue building on the progress we've made—together. , I would like to thank Chairman Cirino and the esteemed members of this committee for their time. I would be more than happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Sincerely,
David Dunn
Board Chair, Shores & Islands Ohio