



## OHIO TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

6500 Taylor Road, Ste. A

Blacklick, OH 43004

Phone: (614) 863-0045 Fax: (614) 863-9751

www.OhioTownships.org

---

### **Am. Sub. House Bill 96 State Operating Budget Senate Finance Committee**

Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Finance Committee, my name is Kyle Brooks, and I am the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Ohio Township Association. On behalf of Ohio's 1,308 townships, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Am. Sub. House Bill 96, the state operating budget.

The OTA appreciates the efforts made in HB 96 to preserve the state's financial commitments to local governments. OTA members value this financial partnership.

Am. Sub. HB 96 contains a variety of provisions the OTA supports and a few that we oppose.

First, I would like to express our support for the following changes included in Am. Sub. HB 96:

- Increasing the burial permit fee to \$10 and directing \$6 of the collected fee to the Cemetery Grant program (COMCD25)
- Requiring a local option petitioner to pay the full cost of a local option election when no township issue or candidate is on the ballot (LOCCD6)
- Raising the Next Generation 9-1-1 access fee from 40¢ to 60¢ (DASCD29)

Now allow me to highlight a few provisions that the OTA opposes.

#### **Marijuana - TAXCD20**

Current law directs a portion of adult-use marijuana tax revenue to the host community - 36% of the 10% excise tax is distributed to townships and municipalities that have adult use dispensaries. The Governor's proposal made significant changes to the adult-use marijuana law and proposed to eliminate the host community fund. We appreciate the House's reinsertion of the host community fund; however, the House reduced the local share to 20% of the excise tax.

Equally as concerning is a provision that sunsets the host community fund after five years and diverts the money to the state's GRF. Additionally, the House added an arbitrary date of July 1, 2025, for which a community must have at least one dispensary that is operational or provisionally licensed in order to receive funding. To date, the Division of Cannabis Control has not allocated the maximum number of licensures. This provision will effectively stop communities from agreeing to host these businesses, which in turn will lower the state's collection of tax revenue.

**The OTA supports amendment SC0407-1**, which eliminates the five-year sunset provision added by the House and increases the host community share to current law, which is 36%.

#### **County Budget Commission - LOCCD19**

The House included a provision that replaces the county prosecutor on the county budget commission with the chair of the board of county commissioners. Due to the nature of the work of the county budget commission, the OTA has concerns with this provision. We believe the replacement could cause conflicts of interest in determining millage collection and placing levies on the ballot. In conjunction with the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association and the County

Treasurers Association of Ohio, the OTA requests striking this change and keeping current law, which includes the county prosecutor on the budget commission. Should the prosecutor recuse themselves, the OTA suggests allowing the county recorder to serve as an alternate. **Please support amendment SC0889.**

**Additional Amendment - Ohio Public Works Proposal - SC1937**

There are 121,844 miles of road in Ohio. Townships maintain over 41,500 miles of roads, more than any other governmental entity. There is great need for additional road funds for townships.

In 2020, ODOT created a one-time Township Road Grant program and provided \$8 million in funding for the grant program. Townships submitted 1,182 projects totaling \$137 million for consideration of funding.

**Amendment SC1937** would increase the OPWC Small Government Program percentage from 10% to 12% of the total OPWC allocation. Furthermore, it would require the first \$10 million in the Small Government Program to be allocated to township road projects that meet minimum scoring criteria. The current law has no set aside for township projects so many are competing with village water and sewer projects, which routinely score higher and receive the funding. The inclusion of this amendment would provide townships under 5,000 in population with \$100 million in road funding over the 10-year bond program, or 4% of the total 10-year OPWC funding. **Please support amendment SC1937.**

The OTA and our member townships thank the Senate for the continued investment in Ohio's townships.

Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Senate Finance Committee, and I would be happy to answer any questions you, or the committee may have.