

Senate Finance Committee
Emily Seibel, Executive Director of Yellow Springs Home, Inc
Substitute House Bill 96
May 23, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. My name is Emily Seibel. I have served as the Executive Director of Yellow Springs Home, Inc. since 2011. I'm here today to request that the Committee remove harmful language that eliminates the Ohio Housing Trust Fund in the House-passed budget.

Smaller, rural communities like mine lack access to resources to develop much-needed affordable housing. Even with Trust Fund dollars, we often need 9-10 funding sources to make a project work. The reason we keep at it is because the need is urgent and growing for safe, quality, and affordable housing. We get calls every week from residents, some of whom are in desperate housing situations, facing homelessness, and not being able to afford basic needs due to the rising cost of housing. Elders and persons with disabilities on fixed incomes are particularly vulnerable to rising housing costs and property taxes.

Yellow Springs Home, Inc. is a nonprofit organization focused on enhancing the quality of life for our community through quality, affordable housing. We have steadily developed homes in our area for over 25 years. The Trust Fund is one of the only governmental resources available for smaller, non-tax credit rental projects.

In recent years the Trust Fund has provided about \$2.5 million to make it possible to develop right-sized affordable rental housing projects in our rural service area. Through three projects, we have developed 20 rentals serving seniors and persons with disabilities, including developmental disabilities, through a partnership with the county board. Our most recent Trust Fund award of \$1.469 million does not appear on the Trust Fund website.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to make these projects happen without the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. We are in the process of leasing up The Cascades Phase 1, which consists of eight affordable rentals serving seniors. **More than 350 households are on our rental interest list for the eight units.**

To meet pent-up demand, we hope to apply for Trust Fund dollars for Phase 2 of The Cascades project this summer. We do not have a replacement source of funding should the Trust Fund be dismantled.

The Village Council of Yellow Springs passed a resolution, included in submitted testimony, unanimously "urging restoration of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund in the Ohio state budget and expressing support for The Cascades affordable housing project." The Village noted its commitment to affordable housing development as a "top public priority," meeting a "documented community need," and the Trust Fund, created in 1991, serves as a "critical

funding source for rural affordable housing development that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace.” The Yellow Springs News also covered this story in a recent article.

Advocating for communities around Ohio, especially rural communities, I respectfully ask that you remove this harmful provision from the state budget and restore the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have at this time. And, if you want to see Trust Fund impact first hand, I would love to host you in Yellow Springs for a sneak peek tour of The Cascades affordable senior rentals.



Photos and Renderings of The Cascades project, being built in four phases. Phase 1 (eight units) is slated for completion this summer.

VILLAGE OF YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO

RESOLUTION 2025-31

URGING RESTORATION OF THE OHIO HOUSING TRUST FUND IN THE OHIO STATE
BUDGET AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE CASCADES AFFORDABLE HOUSING
PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Village of Yellow Springs is committed to affordable housing development as a top public priority, meeting official Village values and a documented community need; and

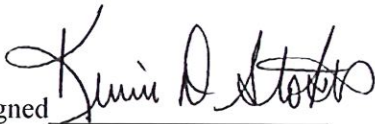
WHEREAS, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund has provided nearly \$2.5 million in funding in recent years toward the development of 20 affordable rentals in Yellow Springs through three projects developed by local nonprofit community development corporation Yellow Springs Home, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, created in 1991, serves as a critical funding source for rural affordable housing development that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace; and

WHEREAS, Yellow Springs Home, Inc. provides sustainable, affordable housing within the Village of Yellow Springs and is developing a four-phase affordable housing project, The Cascades, and the Ohio Housing Trust Fund is a critical funding source not only for The Cascades project but for rural affordable housing development across the state,

NOW, THEREFORE, COUNCIL FOR THE VILLAGE OF YELLOW SPRINGS OHIO HEREBY
RESOLVES THAT:

Section 1. Village Council hereby urges the immediate restoration of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund in the proposed state budget.

Signed 

Kevin Stokes, President of Council

Passed: 5-19-2025

Attest: 

Judy Kintner, Council Clerk

ROLL CALL:

Stokes__Y

DeVore Leonard_Y__

Housh_Y_

Brown_Y_

Gustafson_ABSENT_