



Ohio Senate Finance Committee
Melissa Ferchill Swingos, President, MCM Company, Inc.
June 04, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of restoring the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program to the as-introduced by the Governor version.

I am providing testimony on behalf of MCM Company, Inc. MCM has extensive experience in historic redevelopment, which gives us a unique ability to understand how development and historic preservation intersect. We assist clients by leveraging their assets through consultation on Federal and State Historic Tax Credit programs, conservation easements, and other development tools available to historic properties.

The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit has been instrumental in transforming Cleveland and its city center, generating over \$10 billion in total economic activity and creating more than 7,000 jobs since 2006, according to the Cleveland Restoration Society. Additionally, Cleveland is now a national leader in office conversions and is looked to as an example by peer cities, largely thanks to this incentive. While the program has been truly transformative, we from the business community understand that there are modifications that can be made to make the program more impactful and competitive.

Firstly, we are requesting a restoration of the funding level as passed by the House to increase the annual cap to \$120 million, along with the additional per-project increase from \$5 million to \$10 million. The limited supply of historic preservation funding has created a strong incentive for projects to pursue allocations in the earliest stages of the development process, tying up portions of each annual allocation as owners work to complete pre-development work. An increase to the per-project cap is needed to follow the rise in construction and project costs. Increasing the per-project cap would help push projects toward completion and help fully realize the potential of the incentive. Additionally, adjusting the qualified rehabilitation expenditure percentage allocation for small projects to 35% from 25% incentivizes developers to take on smaller projects or projects in smaller communities due to improved economic circumstances created by the program.

Second, since all historic preservation projects generate a net positive return on investment to the State, as verified by the cost-benefit analysis that is a precondition for every award, the State's best interests are served by maximizing the volume of historic preservation projects completed each year.

Finally, a rolling application process with preference for higher-scoring projects, rather than a biannual approach, would free up the market to pursue all viable redevelopment opportunities on a natural timeline. With more shovel-ready applicants applying on a rolling basis, preservation funds can be deployed more efficiently, reducing current delays between allocating awards and project completion to maximize the program's effectiveness. This would also further reduce the administrative burden on the State and better leverage the incentive, because projects will apply for credits when all financial and other requirements are secured.

We believe that these improvements are needed to simplify the program and make it a more reliable economic development tool, thereby incentivizing developers to invest in Ohio. On behalf of MCM Company, Inc., thank you for your time and consideration on this critical investment in Ohio.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "MF", is written over a horizontal line.

Melissa Ferchill Swingos

President