

**HB 96 Proponent Testimony / Interested Party****Board of Trustees, Heritage Ohio Inc.  
Matt Weiderhold, Executive Director**

Thank you, Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, for the opportunity to provide this written testimony in **support of the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit.**

Heritage Ohio is a state-wide economic development and community revitalization organization centered around historic preservation and the Main Street Approach™. Working with the late Senator Schuring and Representative Calvert, our organization was instrumental in the creation of the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. We continue to advocate for improvements to the program to make this proven economic development tool even more successful.

We are asking the Senate Finance Committee to consider the following recommendations related to the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit:

- **Raise the aggregate cap to \$120 million a year and the per-project cap to \$10 million to address inflation.** Construction inflation, per the Mortenson Construction Cost Index, has doubled since the start of the program in 2007, 18 years ago. The current \$60 million (from 2007) limits the number of projects that move forward each year and the communities that benefit.
- **Thank you for supporting 35% credit for small projects in our smaller communities.**
- **Create a study commission to review the tax incentives in this current General Assembly** rather than a sunset provision, which will dampen the market for projects due to uncertainty for the program's continuation. In the past, Heritage Ohio, working with the Ohio Department of Development, contracted with Cleveland State University to conduct a study that demonstrated the return on investment for Ohio and its communities. We suggest that this General Assembly create a study commission to review all tax incentives programs, to ensure that those that give a positive return are continued. Heritage Ohio would be pleased to participate in, and support, this initiative.

The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit is essential to revitalizing our legacy communities. Since 2007, the OHPTC program has helped to adaptively reuse 442 of Ohio's historic buildings in 91 communities. In some communities, entire city blocks have been transformed. Once-vacant and underutilized buildings are now **income-producing, tax-paying community assets.**



800 E 17<sup>TH</sup> Street Columbus, Ohio 43211  
[www.heritageohio.org](http://www.heritageohio.org)

Total investment for these completed projects has passed \$6 billion, with \$733 million in credits paid out. **This is a return on investment of 8:1.** These dollars are buying materials and hiring skilled labor, with the result that **approximately 1/3 of the tax revenue returns to the state in income BEFORE the credit is even taken.**

All Historic Tax Credit projects are certified as 100% complete before any credit dollars are taken. This is a tax credit that **requires an economic impact analysis as part of the allocation process.** We know from professional studies and experience **that these projects pay back with increased local and state revenues.** You can see the catalytic effect these rehabilitated buildings have had in our communities throughout Ohio.

**Ohio has the third-highest number of historic properties on the National Register in the nation.** This is one of Ohio's "natural resources" that we can capitalize on to **attract and retain businesses to our communities, as well as our youth, our talent, and our entrepreneurs**, with beautiful and vibrant downtowns and main streets of all sizes.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact us with any questions or for any additional information.