



OHIO SENATE GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
February 18, 2025

Written Opponent Testimony
Senate Bill 56

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Ohio Senate General Government Committee:

My name is Kent Scarrett, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Municipal League. On behalf of the Ohio Municipal League, I appreciate the opportunity to provide this written opponent testimony regarding Senate Bill 56, which makes a variety of changes to the state's recreational marijuana law.

The Ohio Municipal League represents more than 730 cities and villages. The services provided by Ohio's municipalities are beneficial for their businesses and residents, including in the area of public safety, which uses up the vast majority of our members' revenues.

We appreciate Sen. Huffman taking a closer look to ensure the enactment of Ohio's recreational marijuana law proves beneficial to the parties that are most affected. We also appreciate that SB56 seeks to expand local government authority to prohibit or limit the number of marijuana cultivators, processors, dispensaries, or testing laboratories.

However, Senate Bill 56 currently changes the revenue distribution of sales taxes related to marijuana, which is of concern to municipalities. We encourage this committee and the Ohio Senate to take into consideration the broader impacts of changes being considered – especially as it relates to taxation related to recreational marijuana.

The legalization of recreational marijuana brings heightened demand for municipal services such as police and fire departments that will further strain municipal budgets. Every community is unique and will experience different challenges in how this issue affects them.

We urge the Legislature to maintain funding for communities that host marijuana facilities so these municipalities can prioritize where the need is greatest in their community and work to make the greatest impact.

Even if changes to the distribution of marijuana sales tax are not ultimately included in Senate Bill 56 – with the potential for such changes to be included in the state operating budget – we want this committee to be aware of our concerns regarding funding for municipalities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our position on Senate Bill 56 on behalf of the members of the Ohio Municipal League.