



Delaware County Engineer

Chris Bauserman, P.E., P.S.

Sub. HB 96 – Interested Party

Chris Bauserman, P.E., P.S. Delaware County Engineer
County Engineers Association of Ohio, Past President

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RE: Township zoning referendum process (LOCCD22)

Chairman Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer Interested Party testimony on behalf of the County Engineers Association of Ohio regarding (LOCCD22) Township zoning referendum process. CEAO supports (LOCCD22) because it ensures stability and efficiency in the zoning process for certified megaprojects, enabling infrastructure professionals — including County Engineers — to plan, coordinate, and deliver critical services without unnecessary delays.

Ohio's County Engineers are responsible for over 29,000 bridges and 44,000 miles of roadways across Ohio. But our responsibilities go beyond maintenance — in many counties, particularly in rural or exurban areas, County Engineers are also the go-to resource for surveying, right-of-way coordination, utility locations, drainage analysis, and infrastructure approvals for township development. This is especially true in regions targeted for megaprojects.

By removing the referendum risk from zoning decisions related to megaprojects, this amendment creates a more predictable environment for professional coordination. It enables engineers to proceed confidently with right-of-way reviews, roadway access planning, and — importantly — land surveying. These surveys, including boundary, topographic, and right-of-way mapping, are foundational to safe and efficient infrastructure development. Without the risk of a referendum halting the project midstream, County Engineers can avoid wasted resources and better align their surveying and engineering timelines with those of developers and township officials.

It's important to emphasize that megaprojects — like the Intel development in Licking County — are often sited in rural or transitioning areas, where townships may not have the technical staff to manage complex infrastructure planning on their own. That's where the County Engineer's role as the statutory engineer for townships is important. Our work overseeing the surveying and engineering forms the backbone of successful public-private partnerships.

This amendment doesn't short-circuit local input — it shifts the process to the front end, where licensed professionals and local leaders can shape the project in a collaborative, proactive way. It allows us to engage early, plan ahead, and ensure infrastructure investments are well designed, appropriately scaled, and shovel-ready when it counts.

From a surveying and planning perspective, this is a common-sense change that eliminates delay while preserving accountability and technical integrity. It helps County Engineers protect the public interest while also helping Ohio remain competitive for transformational economic development.

On behalf of CEOA, we urge your support for this initiative and thank you for your continued leadership on infrastructure and growth.