



## OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

May 13, 2025

### Before the Ohio Senate Housing Committee Proponent Testimony Senate Bill 184

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig and distinguished members of the Senate Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the members of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce regarding Senate Bill 184. My name is Tony Long, General Counsel and Director of Energy & Environmental Policy at the Ohio Chamber.

For several years Ohio has been attracting major economic investment to the state. These projects are often announced in areas with inadequate housing for the workforce that will support the new or expanded business activity. Senate Bill 184 begins to address that aspect for this new investment. The Ohio Chamber supports this legislation and the creation of the accelerator program.

SB 184 offers grants for governmental subdivisions that adopt pro-housing policies in a Residential economic development district (REDD). A REDD is defined as all parcels of land within a twenty-mile radius of a major economic development project. In turn, a major economic development project is defined as a project with at least \$700 million in private investment and is reasonably expected to create, retain or otherwise improve the economic well-being of the area surrounding the project site. This flexibility for the project is a key component of the legislation and avoids strict criteria that attempts to predict specific aspects of each investment.

Equally important is the definition of the REDD. The legislation simply draws a radius for the land and only requires 100 units of residential housing. While not clarified in SB 184 the Ohio Chamber reads that to mean either single family homes, townhouses, condos, and apartments. If that is not the intent, the Ohio Chamber would encourage the allowance of all housing types for individual families and the workforce that will occupy the housing units.

The Ohio Chamber will also work with those producing the rules for the scoring rubric to give more weight to subdivisions that adopt multiple pro-housing development policies with higher scores for those that encourage density, promote diverse residential development options and reduction or elimination of various fees that add cost to housing projects.

While not part of the legislation, it would also be helpful to include in the scoring rubric the disallowance of a referendum or heightened level of signatures in a REDD. I believe Ohio is one of the few states that allow housing projects to be derailed by voter referendums.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this proponent testimony for SB 184. The Ohio Chamber looks forward to working with this committee and the Ohio Senate to move the legislation forward and to adding additional funds to the accelerator fund. I will now attempt to answer any questions you may have for me.