



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

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**Senate Bill 184
Written Proponent Testimony
May 13, 2025
Ohio Senate Housing Committee
William Murdock, Executive Director, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission**

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 184. My name is William Murdock, and I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC).

MORPC represents 90 distinct local governments and partner organizations across a 15-county region, encompassing urban, suburban, and rural communities alike. Our team works side by side with communities, their businesses, and residents to plan for economic development, environment, land use, and more.

We are very encouraged by and supportive of Senate Bill 184. This innovative approach – treating housing as an essential economic development component – underscores just how urgent the need is in Ohio. As you know, housing is one of the biggest challenges facing Central Ohio. By our own estimates, our region will grow to over 3.15 million people by 2050 – and already, housing is growing less accessible for low- and middle-income residents. More housing stock of all kinds is desperately needed to reduce upward market pressure on home prices, both for renters and buyers alike.

Senate Bill 184 takes a thoughtful approach similar to the Housing Technical Assistance Program from HB 315 of the 135th General Assembly. The bill recognizes that local governments have the power and desire to do something about this crisis – but in many cases, they lack the necessary resources. By providing grants to local governments for necessary infrastructure and incentivizing pro-housing policies, communities will be more empowered than ever to ensure that as they grow bigger, they grow better too. MORPC also views this opportunity cross-community collaboration and sharing valuable resources. Within the project footprints identified in the current version of the bill, there are dozens of jurisdictions that will face the same pressure for new housing and infrastructure development. Rather than pitting these communities against each other in competition for discretionary grants, we would encourage the committee to consider language giving regional councils an advisory role in the process or allowing regional councils to apply for REDD grants on behalf of a group of communities.


Lastly, as many small communities may lack the resources to hire consultants and enact the policies necessary to qualify for the grant, we would also encourage you to consider making planning activities and zoning code audits eligible uses of the REDD grant awards. For many communities—particularly rural ones—limited resources often restrict their ability to seize opportunities or tackle complex housing and planning needs. MORPC has proactively addressed this gap through our "planner pool" program, which allows our staff to temporarily assist communities with planning efforts, zoning, or economic development initiatives.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

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Secretary



The program also facilitates responsible use of tax dollars, as MORPC can provide some services at a lower cost than hiring private consultants. Over two dozen communities in our region have sought and received help, but our assistance is constrained, especially in smaller communities without resources to scale up and address urgent housing needs or economic development pressures.

Chair Reynolds, and members of the Senate Housing Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 184. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at wmurdock@morpc.org.

