



March 17, 2025

Ohio Senate  
% Ways and Means Committee  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill 110

Honorable Committee Members:

The Southeastern Ohio Port Authority (SeOPA) serves as the lead economic development agency for Washington County, supporting local growth through technical assistance and strategic investment. Small businesses in rural communities often struggle to secure financing due to restrictive lending practices, leaving them with few viable options outside of venture capital or private equity. The Ohio Rural Business Growth Program has played a vital role in addressing this gap, as demonstrated by the success of its previous funding cycles.

Senate Bill 110's proposed fourth fund would provide a critical infusion of capital into Appalachia, fueling the expansion of rural businesses and strengthening the regional economy. In many underpopulated areas, small businesses are the backbone of economic activity. With most counties in the region operating on annual budgets of less than \$10 million, the potential \$75 million investment would offer a transformative impact, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and supporting the workforce that drives local industry.

For rural economies to thrive, businesses need access to capital that empowers them to expand, innovate, and create jobs. The Ohio Rural Business Growth Program has already proven its effectiveness in bridging financing gaps for small businesses. Senate Bill 110 builds upon this success, ensuring that Appalachian businesses have the resources needed to compete and grow. We urge your support of this important initiative to strengthen Ohio's rural economy and secure a prosperous future for communities like ours.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.C. Roush".

Jesse C. Roush - Executive Director