

As Reported by the House Development Committee

136th General Assembly

Regular Session

2025-2026

Sub. H. B. No. 291

Representatives Mathews, T., Santucci

Cosponsors: Representatives Williams, Newman, Hoops, Claggett, Thomas, D.

To enact sections 122.67 and 122.671 of the Revised Code to create the Ohio International Trade Commission.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 122.67 and 122.671 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 122.67. (A) (1) The Ohio international trade commission is created. The commission shall, as between Ohio and up to eight regions designated by the commission, advance all of the following:

(a) Multilateral trade and investment;

(b) Joint research agreements on issues of mutual interest, particularly regarding electronic and cyber warfare capabilities;

(c) Business and academic exchanges;

(d) Creation of an international trade center to facilitate collaboration between all regions represented in the commission;

(e) Creation of technology centers to promote

<u>collaboration between academic and business interests;</u>	19
<u>(f) Mutual economic support;</u>	20
<u>(g) Mutual investment in infrastructure;</u>	21
<u>(h) Other issues as determined by the commission.</u>	22
<u>(2) The commission shall designate regions by the</u>	23
<u>following process:</u>	24
<u>(a) The nonvoting members specified in divisions (B) (4) to</u>	25
<u>(6) of this section shall propose regions to be designated.</u>	26
<u>(b) The commission shall vote upon each region proposed</u>	27
<u>under division (A) (2) (a) of this section. A region that receives</u>	28
<u>a majority affirmative vote at a meeting of the commission at</u>	29
<u>which a quorum is present is designated.</u>	30
<u>(3) The commission shall designate up to eight initial</u>	31
<u>regions not later than ninety days after the effective date of</u>	32
<u>this section. The commission may designate new regions every</u>	33
<u>four years subsequent to the initial designations, provided that</u>	34
<u>the total number of different designated regions represented on</u>	35
<u>the commission is not more than eight.</u>	36
<u>(B) The commission shall consist of the following members:</u>	37
<u>(1) One member of the senate who is a member of the</u>	38
<u>majority party, appointed by the president of the senate, and</u>	39
<u>one member of the senate who is a member of the minority party,</u>	40
<u>appointed by the president of the senate in consultation with</u>	41
<u>the minority leader of the senate, who have knowledge of, or</u>	42
<u>current or past involvement in, organizations that promote</u>	43
<u>international affairs or have interest in the well-being of</u>	44
<u>trade relations between this state and the regions designated</u>	45
<u>pursuant to division (A) of this section;</u>	46

(2) One member of the house of representatives who is a 47
member of the majority party, appointed by the speaker of the 48
house of representatives, and one member of the house of 49
representatives who is a member of the minority party, appointed 50
by the speaker of the house of representatives in consultation 51
with the minority leader of the house of representatives, who 52
have knowledge of, or current or past involvement in, 53
organizations that promote international affairs or have 54
interest in the well-being of trade relations between this state 55
and the regions designated pursuant to division (A) of this 56
section; 57

(3) Up to eight members appointed by and with the mutual 58
consent of the nonvoting members specified in divisions (B) (4) 59
to (6) of this section, with the advice and consent of the 60
senate, who shall consist of one member for each region 61
designated by the commission pursuant to division (A) of this 62
section who represents the region-American communities or 63
interests in this state of the member's respective region; 64

(4) One nonvoting member appointed by the chief executive 65
of the Ohio chamber of commerce who represents the Ohio chamber 66
of commerce, if such individual is available; 67

(5) One nonvoting member who represents each 68
administrative department, as defined in section 121.01 of the 69
Revised Code, that has a division or office dedicated to 70
international trade issues, including the department of 71
agriculture, appointed by the director of each respective 72
department. 73

(C) Initial members of the commission shall be appointed 74
not later than ninety days after the effective date of this 75
section. Members of the commission appointed under divisions (B) 76

(1) and (2) of this section shall serve terms of two years or 77
for the remainder of the member's legislative term, whichever is 78
less. Members of the commission appointed under division (B) (3) 79
of this section shall serve terms of four years. Any vacancy on 80
the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the 81
original appointment. 82

(D) Members of the commission shall serve without 83
compensation. 84

(E) (1) The commission shall meet and hold hearings at the 85
places it designates throughout the state. 86

(2) The voting members of the commission shall select a 87
chairperson from among the members of the commission by majority 88
vote. The chairperson may appoint from the commission members of 89
subcommittees and subcommittee chairpersons at the chairperson's 90
discretion. 91

(3) A majority of the members of the commission, excluding 92
nonvoting members, constitutes a quorum for the transaction of 93
the business of the commission. 94

(F) The commission shall issue both of the following 95
reports: 96

(1) Not later than fifteen months after the effective date 97
of this section, and annually thereafter, a report of its 98
activities during the preceding year, and any associated 99
findings and recommendations. The commission shall issue this 100
report to the governor, the president of the senate, and the 101
speaker of the house of representatives. 102

(2) On February 1, 2026, and annually on the first day of 103
February thereafter, a report describing each gift, grant, 104
bequest, or other funding it received in the preceding year, 105

including the source and amount of the funds received. The 106
commission shall issue this report to the governor, the 107
president of the senate, the speaker of the house of 108
representatives, the minority leader of the senate, and the 109
minority leader of the house of representatives. 110

(G) The commission may raise funds through direct 111
solicitation or other fundraising events alone, or with other 112
groups, and accept gifts, grants, and bequests from individuals, 113
corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and 114
private organizations and institutions. The funds, gifts, 115
grants, or bequests received pursuant to this section shall be 116
deposited into the Ohio international trade commission fund, 117
which is created in the state treasury. The commission shall use 118
the fund to defray the commission's administrative expenses and 119
to carry out its purposes set forth in this section and section 120
122.671 of the Revised Code. 121

Sec. 122.671. (A) (1) The treasurer of state may, on behalf 122
of the Ohio international trade commission, negotiate the 123
purchase of bonds from regions designated by the commission 124
pursuant to section 122.67 of the Revised Code using funds from 125
the international trade commission fund. 126

(2) The treasurer of state may purchase a bond pursuant to 127
division (A) (1) of this section if the bond meets both of the 128
following: 129

(a) The bond is rated in one of the three highest 130
categories by two nationally recognized statistical rating 131
organizations. 132

(b) The bond is issued by a foreign nation diplomatically 133
recognized by the United States government. 134

(B) All interest earned from a bond purchased under this 135
section shall be deposited into the state treasury to the credit 136
of the international trade commission fund to be used to advance 137
the issues described in division (A) of section 122.67 of the 138
Revised Code, including by financing trade trips, grants, loans, 139
and other such activities the commission deems appropriate to 140
further the goals of the commission. 141

(C) The treasurer of state may negotiate to purchase bonds 142
pursuant to division (A) (1) of this section at below-market 143
interest rates if the purpose of the bonds is to fund a 144
megaproject in this state. 145

(D) As used in this section, "megaproject" has the same 146
meaning as in section 122.17 of the Revised Code. 147