

Interested Party Testimony
House Bill 130
Ohio House State Government Committee
June 10, 2015

Jung Kim
Co-Chair, Columbus Regional Data Site Task Force

Thank you Chairman Maag, Ranking Member Gerberry and members of the House State Government Committee for the opportunity to appear before you to speak on House Bill 130.

I am here as a co-chair of the Regional Data Site Task Force convened by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). This task force is comprised of representatives from a variety of disciplines across public, private, and non-profit sectors to discuss the need for a regional data portal for Central Ohio. Having a portal such as this will allow decision makers, analysts, educators, students, and businesses to spend less time finding data, and more time using it to transform it into actionable outcomes.

At this point, the group has recommended that the portal include a number of elements similar to what is described in House Bill 130, including an online data catalog that allows users access to available data sets by searching on a keyword or topic. Discussion around a governance structure, similar to the data board concept recommended in House Bill 130, is just beginning.

I am both a data consumer and provider. This is what led me to participate in the data site task force and to testify today. As Research Director for the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and for Columbus 2020, the Columbus Region's economic development organization, I wrestle with data every day. While these organizations have not taken official positions on the bill, there was no concern or opposition regarding my testimony.

My day-to-day work involves gathering data from a wide range of sources:

- federal, state and local governments
- foreign government agencies, central banks
- corporate reports, SEC filings
- nonprofit organizations
- private data providers, media

For members of the Columbus Chamber, the data we analyze helps fulfill their needs to better understand their customers, whether businesses or consumers, or their workforce. For Columbus 2020, data feeds into marketing materials, business development and making the case for the Columbus Region and Ohio for investment and job creation.

My team prepares responses to companies considering location or expansion here. Many companies are concerned about the costs of doing business, including state and local taxes. Even for something that seems as ordinary and commonplace as millage rates, county auditors vary significantly in how they provide that data on their websites. It may be a lookup tool, a calculator, at best a rate table in PDF. In the end, we have to take additional steps to process the data into a usable format, likely replicating an Excel or similar file that the auditor already has on hand.

Why not make a public records request, you may ask?

We occasionally do make requests, whether for millage rates, parcel data, or other information, but there is time and expense on all sides to handle and deliver on those requests. If we need the data for an active economic development project, the turnaround time demanded from our clients or their consultants can be a week, more typically three days, sometimes under 24 hours. We often have to make do with whatever is available at the time.

From a broader economic development perspective, cities with open data initiatives such as New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Austin have seen the availability of data help spur innovation in IT and data analytics. Open data levels the playing field, providing even startups and

individuals the ability to obtain data, analyze it, and develop their software or other products – or just play an active role in their community.

By incentivizing the sharing of data, by creating a Data Board that can advise on what data can be made accessible and how, the proposed legislation if enacted can demonstrate the benefits and best practices for having data available in an easily machine-readable format. The concepts of transparent government and an informed citizenry have been first and foremost for discussions in support of House Bill 130, as they should be, but open data will bring a myriad of other positive impacts. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to present. I would be happy to take any questions.