



**BEFORE THE HOUSE FINANCE AGRICULTURE, DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL KICK, CHAIRMAN**

**TESTIMONY
OF
ROB BRUNDRETT
THE OHIO MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION**

MARCH 4, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Finance Agriculture, Development, and Natural Resources Subcommittee. My name is Rob Brundrett and I am the managing director of public policy services for The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). I am pleased to provide proponent testimony on several important manufacturing workforce programs contained in the Development Services Agency's portion of House Bill 110.

The OMA was created in 1910 to advocate for Ohio's manufacturers; today, it has nearly 1,300 members. Its mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing.

The OMA's manufacturing members believe – as you do -- that a robust economy requires a reliable population of workers with the technical knowledge and skills required to meet today's complex global standards for quality – and who can think critically and work collaboratively. Sustained growth in manufacturing productivity requires not only the next generation of globally competent workers, but also workers who are willing to embrace lifelong learning to keep pace with technological advancements and global competition.

A number of programs in House Bill 110 speak directly to the need to train and support workers for the near and longer term.

House Bill 2 of the 133rd General Assembly created Ohio's industry sector partnership grant program. Ohio's 19 manufacturing sector partnerships located in 65 counties across the state work with their regional partners to create career pathways in manufacturing to ensure that students, career switchers, and other potential makers receive the exposure, education, and training for successful manufacturing careers. As a result, Ohio's manufacturers are gaining the talent pipelines to support their continued business success and growth. We are pleased to see the sector partnership grant program continued in House Bill 110.

Another way that Ohio is boosting Ohio's manufacturing talent is through the use of TechCred – an innovative program that reimburses employers that help their employees earn industry-recognized, technology-focused credentials. In the first six rounds of the program, 966 Ohio employers have been approved for TechCred funding, supporting 15,105 credentials earned by Ohio employees. Manufacturers have accounted for more than half of all approved applications. This is an exciting program providing real results in Ohio. We enthusiastically support the continuation of this program and its funding whether through the budget or one of the economic recovery bill introduced this week.

Finally the OMA is pleased that Ohio's Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEPs) continue to receive funding in the proposed budget. MEPs provide technical assistance

programs and services to Ohio manufacturing firms. One needs to look no further than 2020 to understand the true value of these manufacturing centers of resources and knowledge. OMA worked with Ohio MEPs during the early days of the COVID-19 crisis to develop The Ohio Manufacturing Alliance, which enabled many of the state's manufacturers to retool to provide critical PPE and other needed supplies to Ohioans.

These three state-supported services, the industry partnership grant program, Ohio TechCred, and Ohio MEPs are making a real difference in the training requirements of our citizens and the competitiveness of our economy-driving manufacturing sector.

Thank you. I would be happy to try to answer your questions.



March 4, 2020

The Honorable Darrell Kick
Chairman
House Finance Subcommittee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St., 11th floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: House Bill 110 – Written Proponent Testimony re. Industry Sector Partnership Funding

Dear Chairman Kick:

Industry Sector Partnerships (ISPs) are a proven workforce development strategy that put employers in the driver's seat and have demonstrated effectiveness in addressing skills gaps in Ohio and across the country. In Ohio there is a robust network of 19 manufacturing ISPs covering 65 counties with more partnerships in more counties coming online in 2021, towards a goal of covering all 88 counties. More than 1,650 companies are involved in these partnerships. Manufacturers within a regional labor market are working together to generate common solutions to workforce issues with diverse partners, including education and training, economic and workforce development, and community organizations.

It is with that background that we collectively write in support of House Bill 110, and specifically, support for the Development Services Agency's budget and sector partnership funding. House Bill 110 provides funding for the Development Services Agency sector partnership grant program created by the legislature in House Bill 2 of the 133rd General Assembly.

Ohio's sector partnerships work with their regional partners to create career pathways in manufacturing to ensure that students, career switchers, and other potential makers receive the exposure, education, and training to have successful manufacturing careers. Similarly, Ohio's manufacturers are realizing new talent pipelines to support their continued business success and growth. Manufacturing continues to be a chief driver of Ohio's GDP.

Last year eight manufacturing partnerships were awarded ISP grants in the initial round. This money is being used to engage more manufacturing partners, promote manufacturing careers, and develop communication assets and technology tools for participants. The funding is being used to develop new programs or increase enrollment in apprenticeships, TechCred, and other training programs.

The community of manufacturing sector partnerships appreciates the time and effort this committee is taking in deliberating the issues in the budget. We also appreciate the work achieved by the DeWine administration, especially the Lt. Governor and the Office of Workforce Transformation for recognizing the importance and the value of industry sector partnerships and their partnership with the General Assembly to keep successful workforce programs operating.

Sincerely,



Rob Brundrett
Managing Director
Public Policy Services
The Ohio Manufacturers' Association



Sara Tracey
Managing Director
Workforce Services
The Ohio Manufacturers' Association



Central Ohio Manufacturing Partnership







**Proponent Testimony of Ryan Augsburger
House Bill 110 (State Budget Bill)
House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources
The Honorable Darrell Kick, Chairman
March 4, 2021**

Chairman Kick, Ranking Member O'Brien, I appreciate this opportunity to present testimony in support of the proposed budget of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), at \$6.24 million.

My name is Ryan Augsburger and I am the President of The Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). The OMA is Ohio's largest statewide business association comprised solely of manufacturers advocating to protect and grow manufacturing. Manufacturing contributes more to Ohio's economy than any other sector, and is responsible for 17% of the state's gross domestic product.

Energy policy can enhance or hinder Ohio's ability to attract business investment, sustain economic growth and enhance job creation, especially in manufacturing because manufacturing is a significant consumer of energy. The OMA routinely advocates on energy policy at the Statehouse and before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). Legal proceedings frequently also take our cases before the Supreme Court of Ohio, as well as before other legal venues including federal agencies and courts.

Advocacy activity before an adjudicatory body is commonly referred to as *intervening* or being an *intervenor organization*. Interventions in utility cases are costly legal proceedings but they are a necessary check and balance to utility applications, supplier proposals, PUCO audits and investigations, and PUCO rulemakings.

The OMA is commonly referred to as a commercial and industrial intervenor group because most of our members participating in the intervening body - the OMA Energy Group - are customers who pay pursuant to the commercial and industrial rate classes. We are one of dozens of intervenors before the PUCO day in and day out. Other intervenors represent diverse interests, however, only the Ohio Consumers' Counsel has the statutory authority and recognized credibility to protect all of Ohio's residential customers.

OCC has been providing invaluable technical expertise that is important to the PUCO, the process, and to other intervenors. Without the data collected and presented by OCC's experts, the PUCO, the Court, and others may not be aware of the significant overcharges customers have been required to pay over the past decade. These data are useful in describing the scale of the problem to the public, lawmakers, and other regulatory agencies.

While OMA and others may not always agree with OCC on rate design or allocation of costs among customer classes, we frequently agree on the need for customer protections from the many utility proposals that raise customers' rates without offsetting benefits.

Over the past few years, the OMA has joined the OCC and others in appeals to the Supreme Court of Ohio regarding unlawful utility charges assessed to all customers. Business customers benefit from the work of this expert and principled residential customer advocate.

We have also partnered with the OCC in some matters before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC. Absent a willing partner in the OCC, other intervenor groups may not have the funding available to hire experts and litigate to the extent that OCC does in the numerous regulatory proceedings. Can you imagine the risk to all facets of Ohio if Ohio customers were not duly represented?

OCC's involvement in the FirstEnergy Solutions bankruptcy case) has been critical to defending the interests of Ohio residents and businesses alike. OCC stands in the stead of customer groups that are not able for one reason or another to intervene in cases. Finally, OCC staff professionals possess expertise needed in PUCO investigations and rulemakings that other groups simply don't have.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, the Ohio energy marketplace today is more dynamic, and riskier, than ever for customers. We are all customers and customer costs directly impact Ohio's competitiveness. For these reasons, the OMA supports the important work for Ohioans this agency and its leadership are performing. We urge the House to fully fund OCC at its requested level (\$6.24 million reflecting a \$700,000 budget increase) so that the agency can continue being effective in protecting the interests of Ohio's residential consumers.

That concludes my testimony. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you.