

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

**HB 138**

**June 26, 2018**

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HB 138, which would save municipalities unnecessary expenditures in notifying property owners of special assessments.

According to current law, municipalities can fund public improvements related to street lights, street cleaning, street treatment, shade trees or ditches by levying special assessments against abutting, adjacent and contiguous property owners. In the event the assessment is estimated to exceed $250, municipalities are mandated to notify property owners by direct notice, such as certified mail. When the assessment cost is under $250, the cost is automatically added to a parcel’s tax duplicate at no extra cost to the municipality.

Often, these special assessments must be conducted by municipalities each year. In the even the assessment will exceed the current $250 threshold, a municipality incurs the cost of directly notifying the property owner. Sending certified mail to many property owners over many years means municipalities across Ohio are incurring substantial and unnecessary costs due to this out-of-date mandate.

This $250 threshold has not been adjusted since it was originally set in 1982. Accounting for inflation, that threshold would currently exceed $500 per assessment. HB 138 updates current statue so this threshold reflects the cost of assessments in the present.

HB 138 is a common-sense solution brings this section of the code into the modern day and, at the same time, saves cities and villages across this state up to thousands of dollars in unnecessary notification costs. The League is grateful to Rep. Rogers for recognizing the problem and offering a solution. Thank you for your consideration, and we urge for your favorable passage of this bill.

Respectfully,

 

Kent Scarrett

Executive Director

Ohio Municipal League