



Testimony in support of H.B. 377

Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, we write to you today in support of H.B. 377, which will ensure that non-entitlement units (NEU) of government in Ohio will receive the second tranche of their American Rescue Plan (ARP) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

The Ohio Mayors Alliance is a bipartisan coalition of mayors of the 30 largest cities in Ohio. Of our 30 member cities, 9 are non-entitlement units. Although Ohio's economy is doing well, no city of any size in Ohio is immune to the crippling impact of the pandemic on low-income families—Ohioans who least benefit from the quickly recovering economy and who are most negatively impacted by rising costs. ARP money has been crucial in giving our cities the flexibility they need to quickly address their needs, balance their budgets, retain employees, and invest in families, workers, and businesses hardest hit by the pandemic.

American Rescue Plan funds have been put to good use in Ohio over the past year. On average, Ohio Mayors Alliance cities spend about two thirds of their municipal budgets on public safety. Because of the 2021 disbursements of ARP funds to local governments, cities have been able to keep their first responders employed and keep communities safe. Budget stabilization and public safety have been two of the most widely applied uses of ARP funds in Ohio cities. Moreover, the ARP-funded grant programs created by the General Assembly and executed by Governor Dewine have funded crucial water infrastructure, violence prevention, and brownfield remediation projects across Ohio.

Because the State of Ohio determined in 2021 that townships qualify as eligible to receive ARP funds as non-entitlement units, NEU-cities and villages overall received less money than initially projected when this funding was announced in spring 2021. We support townships receiving federal support, but the spread of these dollars across a much larger pool of communities made each NEU share smaller. As a result, the need for this second tranche of funding is especially important for our member communities. We urge you to vote yes on H.B. 377 as quickly as possible to ensure its passage this spring.