



WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

PROPONENT TESTIMONY

SB 84

March 23, 2021

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to write in support of SB 84, which would fund the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund for the cleanup of brownfield sites.

From 2002 to 2013, communities across the Ohio received \$400 million in grants through the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund. These funds helped redevelopment over 380 blighted properties and generated \$500 million in household and business earnings generated annually by those redeveloped sites.

SB 84 would fund the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund by redirecting excess liquor profits the state currently receives from JobsOhio if those profits exceed an annual threshold. The legislation would authorize that those deferred payments be pledged for Clean Ohio bonds. The legislation would also add county land reutilization corporations or more commonly known as county land banks to the list of eligible applications for CORF funding. The inclusion of land banks will provide greater opportunities for partnerships to further reclaim, rehabilitate and reutilize economically nonproductive land.

As you are aware, a brownfield site is an abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial, commercial, or institutional property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by known or potential releases of hazardous substances or petroleum. It is estimated that Ohio has over 9,000 of these former industrial and commercial sites, preventing those areas from being repurposed. The redevelopment of brownfields can provide many benefits to a community, including an increased tax base, the creation of new jobs, the utilization of existing infrastructure, and the removal of blight. The removal of contaminants also helps to protect the health of individuals and the environment.

Municipalities across the state are financially challenged to revitalize critical areas within their communities with the widespread and persistent presence of “dead zones” or “zombie” properties which are unable to be redeveloped and made commercially viable due to contaminants left by previous activity on the property. SB 84 recognizes that many local governments – particularly in smaller or more rural counties – lack the adequate funding to address what are often legacy challenges and will provide flexible and sustainable funding for Ohio to reinvest in itself and its communities.

Thank you for your consideration, and we urge for your favorable passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KMS', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Kent Scarrett
Executive Director
Ohio Municipal League