



**Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments**

**Senate Local Government & Elections Committee**

**Proponent Testimony on HB 531**

**May 24, 2022**

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee. I regret that I am unable to be with you all today in person, but I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 531. My name is Tim Brown, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG).

TMACOG thanks Representative Haraz Ghanbari for working with us to craft this legislation for your consideration. The bill would grant permissive authority to a council of governments (COG), metropolitan planning organization, and rural transportation planning organization to contract with county prosecuting attorneys for legal counsel. Our organizations already work closely with our local governments and have good working relationships. But, at present, we do not have the option to contract with a county prosecutor's office for legal counsel. We often utilize private legal counsel, which sometimes can be more expensive for the taxpayers, and an expense that may not always be merited given the limited scope of COG tasks that require legal review. Councils of governments are defined under Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code, and as entities of government, we believe we should join with the other taxpayer supported boards, commissions, and authorities that already have the option to use such county services.

Thank you again for your consideration of our support for HB 531. I hope to be able to answer any questions you may have at a future hearing.