



Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments

Senate Local Government & Elections Committee

Proponent Testimony on HB 531

November 15, 2022

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Kevin Futryk, legislative representative for the Ohio Association of Regional Councils, and I will be delivering testimony on behalf of Tim Brown, Executive Director of the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), as he is not able to be with us today.

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 am happy to answer any questions from the committee on behalf of former State Representative Brown.