

June 8, 2023



Re: HB 64 – Disallowing Eminent Domain re: Recreational Trails

Dear Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski and House Civil Justice Committee Members,

On behalf of Bike Miami Valley, the people in Greater Dayton who bicycle on trails, and our membership base in Montgomery, Greene, Miami, and Warren counties, I strongly encourage you to oppose the passage of HB 64, which removes the ability to utilize eminent domain to improve quality of life for your constituents.

Public trails have many benefits for all Ohioans and help drive our tourism economy. Recreational trails not only attract out of state visitors, but they also attract new companies to set up in Ohio and foster an invested workforce. Many adjacent property owners to trails have seen land and home values increase once trails are built nearby. The Little Miami Scenic Trail - the longest trail in our region - has seen positive economic benefits from its existence. Also, it should be mentioned that preventable public health concerns can be mitigated or even eliminated when residents live within 15 minutes from a trail.

Disallowing the ability to use eminent domain to develop recreational trails, an approach that is almost never employed, could artificially sacrifice an important tool in Ohio for park districts and is in the disinterest of citizens, municipalities, and agencies. **State legislators must act to preserve home rule.**

Most of Ohio's park districts and other trail managing agencies have never used eminent domain for developing recreation trails. In fact, here in Dayton, the tactic of eminent domain has never been utilized and this region is home to the nation's largest paved trail network. Our members, covering four counties, are proud of the trails that have been created and would love to see more. **There are ways to work side-by-side with landowners and those property owners located on the last piece of a trail puzzle would and are required to be fairly compensated.** Lastly, if this limited-use tool were to be erased, it could have negative implications of wasteful tax dollar spending - holding public agencies on slim budgets hostage to unfair land price gouging.

**HB 64 is bad for Ohioans and violates home rule. Bike Miami Valley strongly opposes HB 64, and we encourage you to do the same.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura A. Estandia".

Laura A. Estandia, Executive Director