

December 13, 2006

The Honorable John Carey  
Chairman  
Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee  
Statehouse  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Senator Carey,

On behalf of the Ohio Municipal League, I respectfully request that one amendment inserted by the House be removed from the State Capital Budget, H.B. 699 which is before your committee today.

The amendment would alter the structure of the Hamilton County District Integrating Committee. That committee is the mechanism for balancing all the various infrastructure needs for Hamilton County and deciding which projects should receive funding under the state's infrastructure bond program (Issue 2).

As you well know, Senator, the Issue 2 program has been very popular and useful for twenty years. During those years, this state program has helped fund nearly 11,000 essential infrastructure projects throughout the state. In November, 2005, the people voted to extend the program for another ten years with an increase.

When first writing the guidelines to implement Issue 2, all of us involved, legislators and lobbyists, knew that the key to much of the success of Issue 2 would be to have a very well balanced local decision-making body. We knew achieving that balance would be a very delicate and challenging matter. After twenty years of great success, I think those involved met that challenge pretty well.

The League does not believe the decision-making structures put in place, that have worked well for twenty years, should be changed without broad local support and due consideration. We do not think such a change should occur as a small item within a much larger bill. Just as Issue 2 cannot work as a whole without a great deal of local consensus, changes to the structures that make that consensus possible should not be made without a full and complete discussion among local leaders and the General Assembly. We think that, by the very nature of the bill, that discussion cannot be achieved as an amendment to the Capital Bill.

For that reason, we urge you to remove the amendment from the bill.

As always, we appreciate your kind consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

John K. Mahoney  
Deputy Director