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## **Ohio House Holds First Hearing for House Bill 435, Business Community Priority Legislation**

*COLUMBUS, OHIO* – The Ohio Finance Committee on Wednesday held its first hearing on House Bill 435, legislation that would create the Ohio Manufacturing Technologies Assistance Program (MTAP).

MTAP is a \$12 million grant program targeting small- and medium-sized manufacturers that otherwise lack the capital and capability to modernize their machinery and facilities. House Bill 435 is jointly sponsored by State Representatives Nick Santucci (R-Howland Twp.) and Steve Demetriou (R-Bainbridge Township).

The request for this program was a joint endeavor by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA). Both organizations earlier advocated for this program's inclusion in Ohio's biennial budget for FY 2024-2025 (House Bill 33), though it was ultimately omitted.

"We are seeing successful policy models in neighboring states like Iowa and Indiana, and the Ohio Manufacturers' Association is confident that MTAP will not only stimulate growth and competitiveness but also position Ohio's manufacturers for sustained success in the

face of rapid technological change,” said OMA President Ryan Augsburger. “We thank Representatives Santucci and Demetriou for their leadership in pushing this innovative solution to enhance our industry’s operations and supply chain.”

The State of Indiana has seen great success from its own Manufacturing Readiness Grant Program, which was launched in 2020 and has awarded \$22.8 million to support \$190.4 million in projects in 66 counties.

In their appearances before the Ohio Finance Committee, both bill sponsors noted the positive economic impacts of such a program on smaller, Ohio-based businesses.

“This program would also catalyze economic growth and innovation by providing smaller companies with the means to facilitate upgrades, including robot integration and Enterprise Resource Planning system modernization, allowing them to expand operations and meet increased demand,” said Rep. Santucci.

“To stymie the loss of population and jobs across our state, we absolutely need to attract outside companies to come and do business in Ohio,” said Rep. Demetriou. “However, considering the competitive national landscape, and Ohio’s long history and culture of successful manufacturing businesses, we have a great opportunity to create an environment to organically grow businesses that already call Ohio home.”

This legislation is also one of the Ohio Chamber’s Top Ten Policy Priorities, and it is recommended in the organization’s *Blueprint for Ohio’s Economic Future*, a detailed report that focuses on Ohio’s key areas for growth and improvement.

“Manufacturing is an essential driver of Ohio’s economy; however, many small- and medium-sized Ohio manufacturers, especially in Northeast Ohio, still use 20- to 50-year-old equipment and machinery,” said Ohio Chamber President & CEO Steve Stivers. “The one-time capital assistance provided by this grant would reward their ongoing state presence, stimulate modernization and private investment, and serve as a quality retention and growth tool.”

The Ohio Chamber is the state’s leading business advocate and represents thousands of companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

The Ohio Manufacturers’ Association is Ohio’s largest statewide business association comprised solely of manufacturers. Established in 1910, the OMA’s mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing. It represents manufacturers of all sizes in every subsector of the industry. Manufacturing is Ohio’s largest economic sector, employing nearly 700,000 Ohioans and contributing more than \$134 billion annually to the state’s economy.

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