



OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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Vote Today for Issue 2 - State Capital Improvement Program

Today, Tuesday, May 6, is the day to vote for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce-endorsed Issue 2! Issue 2 will renew the State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP), which provides funds through bonds to communities in all 88 counties for repairs and improvements of roads, bridges, and other essential infrastructure without raising taxes. The SCIP program has a proven track record of not only improving Ohio's infrastructure but also attracting federal infrastructure funding to Ohio and boosting the state's economy. In the current 10-year cycle, the program has awarded \$2.3 billion to 1,084 local governments for 4,490 projects, generating and sustaining tens of thousands of jobs. Issue 2 has bipartisan support, and it has broad support from various organizations across the state. In addition to the Ohio Chamber, Issue 2 is supported by over 70 organizations including the Ohio Contractors Association, Ohio Township Association, many regional planning organizations, many regional chambers of commerce, and more.

You can learn more at www.Yes2BuildOhio.com. Vote today!

House Bill 15 Energy Overhaul

The General Assembly chose to use House Bill 15 (pending in Senate Energy Committee) instead of Senate Bill 2 as the legislative vehicle to enact major changes to Ohio energy laws. Senate Bill 2 was pending in the House. During the two-week spring break, the two committees worked together to craft final language for House Bill 15. The Senate passed it 33-0 and the House concurred by a vote of 94-2. Among the changes to Ohio's current law is the elimination of Energy Security Plans to set electric rates replaced by 3-year rate plans with yearly true ups. The legislation also speeds up the regulatory approval process, reduces property taxes, and adds priority investment areas to incent development of new baseload generation. Additional updates to our members will be made as technical details are digested.

Chamber Members Announce Groundbreaking Quantum Computing Partnership

Ohio Chamber members Miami University and the Cleveland Clinic have announced a groundbreaking partnership to advance education, strengthen Cleveland's workforce, and establish Ohio as a leader in quantum computing. Using the Clinic's IBM



Quantum System One – the world's first quantum computer fully dedicated to healthcare research – the two entities are establishing Ohio's first specialized degree programs and research experiences in quantum computing. Quantum computing allows for research requiring massive amounts of storage and calculations for health care, such as storing genetic sequences, simulating how chemical formulas might operate in space, better understanding medical images, determining therapies and how quickly patients can return to work, and diagnosing cancer from blood tests.

With the first-year cohort scheduled for this fall, Miami University students will spend 6-8 months in the Cleveland Innovation District, where they will use Quantum System One and Clinic labs, and engage directly with biomedical researchers while they learn the computer science involved with the program. Students will get to see the research side of things and how the research ultimately translates to markets. In addition to the creation of specialized bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level degree programs, Miami University students will take part in workforce development and internship opportunities that foster research collaborations and pathways for graduates to contribute to healthcare innovation and the quantum computing industry.

According to Boston Consulting Group, quantum computing will create \$450 billion to \$850 billion of economic value globally, sustaining a \$90 billion to \$170 billion market for hardware and software providers by 2040. Furthermore, the quantum sector is estimated to generate some 250,000 new jobs by 2030, and 840,000 by 2035. Quantum computing jobs will span a range of industries, from software development and systems integration to research and development. The dynamic exchange of knowledge between these two institutions will drive both innovation and entrepreneurship in healthcare, and the Ohio Chamber commends Miami University and the Cleveland Clinic on this historic endeavor.

Ohio Supreme Court Affirms the Harvey Solar Project

Last week, the Ohio Supreme Court upheld the Ohio Power Siting Board's (OPSB) decision to grant a certificate of need for a solar project in Licking County. The project will provide up to 350 megawatts of electricity once fully constructed. This is one of several solar energy projects pending at the Supreme Court. This decision confirms the standard of review for the court concerning decisions by the OPSB.

House Marijuana Legislation Incorporates Ohio Chamber Employer Protections

The Ohio House Judiciary Committee last week heard proponent testimony for House Bill 160, which proposes numerous adjustments to Ohio's adult-use marijuana laws as passed by Issue 2 in 2023. The



bill, sponsored by State Representative Brian Stewart (R-Circleville), contains critical workplace protections requested by the Ohio Chamber (OCC) and has several provisions similar to Senate Bill 56, which is the Senate's Issue 2 cleanup bill that is likewise supported by the OCC. Rick Carfagna, SVP of Government Affairs for the Ohio Chamber, offered testimony in favor of the bill citing specifically the employer workplace protections, the inclusion of private property rights, and the revised tax distribution.

EMPLOYER WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS

HB 160 addresses a provision currently found in Ohio's medical marijuana employer protection law but not included in Issue 2, which specifies that employers do not violate any anti-discrimination laws when enforcing drug-free workplace policies. Accordingly, the simple deletions of "medical" now expands this provision to apply to all forms of marijuana, regardless of whether it is medical or recreational.

Next, HB 160 also now clarifies that any person discharged from employment because of their use of marijuana – not just medical – is discharged for just cause and ineligible for unemployment benefits if the use was in violation of the employer's drug free or zero tolerance policies.

The OCC is grateful for these critical changes and other efforts to strengthen Ohio's employer protection laws to reinforce employers' abilities to maintain drug-free workplaces, zero tolerance policies and the flexibility to conduct employee testing.

ENSURING PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

The OCC firmly believes that publicly accessible places such as shopping malls, restaurants and bars, amusement parks, and other large areas under private ownership should be able to limit cannabis use, possession, or transfer beyond the state's existing smoking ban. HB 160 largely achieves this goal by limiting the smoking, combustion, and vaporization of recreational marijuana to private residences. As Carfagna noted during questioning, the ban is not comprehensive as the public consumption of edible cannabis products is still legal. However, the Chamber acknowledges that the focus on smoking and vaping in HB 160 captures the most egregious forms of public usage. Furthermore, HB 160 also has provisions aligning with the OCC's request to empower rental property owners to ban the use of marijuana products on their properties.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce is grateful that the House and Senate have included these important employer protections into both HB 160 and SB 56, and we will continue to monitor the progress of both bills to ensure the safe and responsible usage of recreational marijuana.