



Mid-Ohio Regional
Planning Commission

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215

T 614.228.2663
TTY 800.750.0750

www.morpc.org

William Murdock, Executive Director of MORPC
Ohio Senate Criminal Justice Committee
Senate Bill 146
Proponent Written Testimony
June 3, 2015

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Obhof, Ranking Minority Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present this proponent party written testimony on Senate Bill 146 (SB 146).

My name is William Murdock and I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). MORPC is a voluntary association of over 50 Central Ohio political subdivisions that envision and embrace innovative directions in a variety of fields such as: transportation, energy, housing, land use, the environment and economic prosperity. We are committed to collaborating and creating new strategies that continue to enhance our region.

MORPC has a long history of working closely with local communities and the state to ensure that our residents are safe while traveling. MORPC's safety program staff actively analyzes crash data. From those results, we can better understand why crashes occur and how certain populations, behaviors and locations are more susceptible to a deadly auto accident. As many of you know, distracted driving is an increasing trend that is causing the increased occurrence of deaths and injuries on our roads.

SB 146 would create an enhanced driving penalty for "distracted driving" that only comes into play when a driver is pulled over for another moving violation. The amount of the fine that will be assessed for the additional penalty of driving while distracted will be \$100 for each offense. The fee will be paid on top of the fine assessed for the original violation.

Put simply, we support this legislation because it will save lives. It will remind drivers to pay attention to the sole task at hand, driving. A number of our local government members have developed their own education programs to reduce distracted driving such as Grove City's Distracted and Impaired Driving simulator. The simulator is mounted in a trailer and taken to area schools and public events to bring awareness about the dangers of distracted driving. As Grove City Mayor Richard "Ike" Stage said, "It is critical to educate people about the grave consequences of distracted driving because you may get a second chance with the simulator, but you don't get one when you're out on the road."

MORPC has also long supported legislation that curbs distracted driving. In 2010, MORPC adopted a resolution that promoted and supported legislation that reduces distracted driving. Passing legislation like SB 146 has been included in MORPC's Public Policy Agenda since 2011. Furthermore, we have a policy that bans distracted driving of staff.

In conclusion, we support SB146 because it curtails unsafe driving. This is only one step to addressing this problem, but an important one. It is essential for us to continue to raise awareness of this growing epidemic and to give law enforcement the strong tools in the bill to deter distracted driving. Doing so will save lives and make our roads safer for everyone.

William Murdock, AICP
Executive Director

Eric S. Phillips
Chair

Matt Greeson
Vice Chair

Rory McGuinness
Secretary

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me, at 614-233-4101 or at wmurdock@morpc.org, with any questions or concerns.