



2021-2022 STATE OPERATING BUDGET HOUSE BILL 110

Last month, Governor Mike DeWine signed the state operating budget into law. The biennial appropriations bill provides \$74 billion of allocated funds that provide the necessary financial resources for the state government to function.

MORPC's Government Affairs team was assertive in its advocacy, and played an active role throughout the budget process. MORPC staff utilized the agency's 2021-2022 Public Policy Agenda to advocate for regional priorities and navigate various budget issues. MORPC Executive Director William Murdock provided testimony to both the House and Senate Finance committees and submitted a letter to members of the conference committee who worked to resolve the chambers' differences on the bill.

MORPC FOCUSED ITS ADVOCACY ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

- **Reinvesting in Local Communities:** Local communities are the heart of Ohio's success. They deliver critical services for residents and businesses. To ensure a continued level of local services statewide and give our region the ability to deal with pressures of growth, MORPC strongly advocated that the Local Government Fund (LGF) percentage of the portion of the General Revenue Fund (GRF) be restored to 3.68 percent.
The budget maintains funding for the LGF at its statutory level. Based on current revenue estimates, the LGF will provide \$437 million in FY 2022 and \$452 million in FY 2023 in shared revenue to local governments.
- **Expanding Affordable Broadband Services:** Broadband is an essential utility for 21st century commerce, education, and healthcare. That's why MORPC strongly supported the passage of HB 2, which created the residential broadband expansion program. This legislation is a necessary start, but more needs to be done to assist residents and businesses. A logical next step toward curbing the digital divide is designating and funding regional councils as "Regional Broadband Councils" that would work in alignment and in partnership with BroadbandOhio to coordinate broadband deployment and provide technical and planning support to local entities in their respective regions.
The budget appropriated \$230 million in FY 2022 and \$20 million in FY 2023 to issue grants for broadband.
- **Government-Owned Broadband:** MORPC strongly opposed the inclusion of an amendment to the budget that effectively prohibits new local government broadband systems and severely restricts the ability of existing systems to serve new customers. We know many Ohioans lack broadband service, a fact that was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. If enacted, the amendment would prevent Ohio communities from implementing much needed community broadband initiatives and public-private broadband partnerships.
The conference committee removed the Senate provision that would have placed restrictions on locally owned and operated broadband networks.



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MORPC FOCUSED ITS ADVOCACY ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES (CONTINUED):

- **Brownfield Investment:** Over the past decade, MORPC has continued to support and advocate for policies and funding for a timely cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields—vacant, blighted, or abandoned land—and historic buildings to revitalize and reinvest in local communities.

Brownfield remediation advocacy was successful, with an appropriation of \$350 million for FY 2022. In addition, the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization program was appropriated \$150 million for grants.

- **State Recognition of Juneteenth holiday:** Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Adopting it as a state holiday recognizes the continued need to ensure equity and equality for Ohio residents. Additionally, Juneteenth is part of a series of measures that are supported by our wide coalition of members to reflect the values and diversity of our region and state.

Ohio will now recognize Juneteenth as a State holiday.

Involvement in the budget process by the General Assembly is mandated by the Ohio Constitution and is in effect for two fiscal years. Work on the budget occurs during the first six months of the two-year session of the General Assembly. To read more about MORPC's activity throughout the budget process, visit: morpc.org/program-service/government-affairs/

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