

RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED LEGISLATION (SENATE BILL 43) TO ELIMINATE A LODGING TAX WITHIN ASHTABULA COUNTY

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 43, introduced by Senator Sandra O'Brien, proposes changes that would negatively impact Ashtabula County by altering the funding mechanism for the Ashtabula County Convention & Facilities Authority (CFA), which has been instrumental in supporting the Geneva Lodge and Conference Center, as well as the county's broader tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners believes that the passage of Senate Bill 43 would impose undue financial and administrative burdens on the county, its residents, and local governance, ultimately limiting the county's ability to promote economic development and tourism; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation would eliminate a vital lodging tax that funds the CFA, a tax that is visitor-generated and rarely, if ever, paid by county residents unless they are staying at a local lodging establishment; and

WHEREAS, without this lodging tax, the financial burden of supporting economic growth and tourism-related infrastructure would shift to county residents, placing an undue strain on local taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, funds generated from the lodging tax have significantly contributed to the county's tourism industry, which currently has an annual economic impact of \$859.4 million, welcomed 19.5 million visitors in 2023, supports 4,082 jobs, and resulted in \$520.7 million in direct visitor spending, according to the Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau; and

WHEREAS, without tourism-generated state and local taxes, it is estimated each local household would need to pay an additional \$1,327 to maintain current government services; and

WHEREAS, this is a tax with a purpose, supporting continued growth in our tourism industry within the confines of the laws that govern convention and facilities authorities, just as it functions successfully in other parts of the state with similar CFAs; and

WHEREAS, this funding has not only supported the Geneva Lodge and Conference Center, ensuring its success and sustainability, but will also be utilized in the future to enhance tourism throughout Ashtabula County, including areas outside of Geneva-on-the-Lake, such as southern Ashtabula County, Ashtabula, Conneaut, Geneva, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 43 was introduced without any prior consultation with county officials, tourism industry leaders, local stakeholders, or other relevant parties, leaving those directly impacted without a voice in the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, similar lodging tax structures exist successfully in other regions of Ohio to fund CFAs, and there is no justification for targeting Ashtabula County's successful model while allowing other counties to maintain their funding mechanisms; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners hereby formally opposes Senate Bill 43 and urges the Ohio General Assembly to reject this legislation in its current form; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Mike DeWine, Senator Sandra O'Brien, members of the Ohio General Assembly, the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, and other relevant stakeholders.

**ASHTABULA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CERTIFICATION PAGE**

Resolution No. 2025-101

February 20, 2025

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED LEGISLATION (SENATE BILL 43) TO
ELIMINATE A LODGING TAX WITHIN ASHTABULA COUNTY**

Upon the motion of Kathryn L. Whittington, seconded by Casey R. Kozlowski.

VOTE:

J.P. Ducro IV

Aye

Casey R. Kozlowski

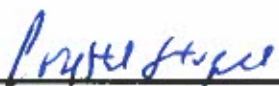
Aye

Kathryn L. Whittington

Aye

CERTIFICATE OF CLERK

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution acted upon and duly passed by the Board of County Commissioners of Ashtabula County, Ohio, on the date noted above.


Crystal Sturgill, Clerk of the Board *Acting*
Board of County Commissioners
Ashtabula County, Ohio