As Introduced

136th General Assembly
Regular Session
2025-2026

S. B. No. 184

Senator Reynolds

To enact sections 122.634 and 122.635 of the Revised Code to establish residential economic development districts and to create a grant program for housing developments within such districts.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 122.634 and 122.635 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 122.634. The housing accelerator fund is created in the state treasury. The fund shall consist of money appropriated to it by the general assembly and all other money received for the purposes of section 122.635 of the Revised Code. All investment earnings of the fund shall be credited to the fund. The director of development shall use the money in the fund only for the purpose of providing grants under section 122.635 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 122.635. (A) As used in this section:

(1) "Major economic development project" means a project in this state that meets both of the following criteria:

(a) The project is reasonably expected to create, retain, and attract jobs or otherwise improve the economic well-being of

the area surrounding the project site;

(b) At least seven hundred million dollars in private investments are committed to establish, expand, renovate, or occupy a facility as part of a single project at a designated project site, including investment in new buildings, additions or improvements to existing buildings, machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and inventory.

(2) "Major workforce housing project" means a project that reserves at least one hundred units, designed for residential occupancy by at least one hundred individuals or families living independently from each other.

(3) "Pro-housing development policy" may include any of the following:

(a) Having a process in place to increase the rate at which permits for housing developments are reviewed;

(b) Having a pre-approval process in place for an expedited review of permits for a diverse range of housing developers;

(c) Subsidizing or decreasing costs related to water or sewer connections and extensions for major workforce housing projects;

(d) Acquiring and readying sites that are ready to be financed and built upon by developers;

(e) Reducing or eliminating impact, inspection, and plan review fees for housing developers;

(f) Adopting a zoning plan that includes promoting higher density, small lot size, and minimum setback requirements;

(g) Developing a comprehensive plan that promotes diverse residential development options;

(h) Having no or minimal parking requirements for developments that include residential units;

(i) Conducting a traffic study, improving water or sewer infrastructure, improving roads, or permitting both rigid and flexible pavement types;

(j) Developing partnerships to expand the provision of sewer and water services to new areas;

(k) Promoting the use of non-traditional building structures such as modular or manufactured homes.

(4) "Residential economic development district" means all parcels of land within a twenty-mile radius of a major economic development project.

(B) A county, township, or municipal corporation that is fully or partially located within a residential economic development district may apply for a grant under this section in the form and manner prescribed by the department of development. The county, township, or municipal corporation may submit the application independently or in collaboration with a housing developer or one or more other counties, townships, or municipal corporations. The application shall, at minimum, include documentation or other evidence that proves, to the satisfaction of the department, that the applicant has done or has imminent plans to do both of the following within the district:

(1) Adopt and implement pro-housing development policies;

(2) Approve a major workforce housing project.

(C) The department shall review applications and award

grants under this section on a rolling basis, to the extent that funds are available. The department shall evaluate applications and determine the amount of each grant awarded in accordance with scoring metrics that give preference to counties, townships, and municipal corporations that:

(1) Adopt more pro-housing development policies in terms of both quantity and impact;

(2) Allow for higher density, smaller lot size, smaller or no side yard setbacks, and minimal open space.

(D) If a county, township, or municipal corporation is approved for a grant under this section based on imminent plans to adopt and implement pro-housing development policies and approve a major workforce housing project, the department shall confirm that the county, township, or municipal corporation follows through with those plans, as described in the grant application, before disbursing grant funds. A grant recipient shall use the funds only for the following purposes:

(1) Providing capital for housing development through grants or loans;

(2) Acquiring and readying sites for development;

(3) Providing financial assistance for housing-related infrastructure projects including road improvements and water or sewer connections;

(4) Addressing additional service or public safety needs due to increases in population;

(5) Any other purpose deemed appropriate by the director of development.

(E) The director of development shall adopt rules in

accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to implement and administer this section. The rules shall address application procedures, scoring metrics, grant distribution, and state model zoning plans that include density, lot size, and setback preferences.

(F) The general assembly, in enacting this section, hereby declares its intent to encourage major workforce housing projects in areas of the state that otherwise would not attract such developments and to increase home ownership among Ohioans.