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S.B. 184
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Sen. Reynolds

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SUMMARY

- Creates a grant program for counties, townships, and municipal corporations located near major economic development projects.
- Requires applicants to adopt pro-housing development policies and approve major workforce housing projects.
- Provides criteria for the Director of Development to score applications.
- Establishes the Housing Accelerator Fund to provide money for the grants.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Residential economic development district (REDD) grants

Overview

The bill creates a grant program for counties, townships, and municipal corporations that are fully or partially located within a residential economic development district (REDD). A REDD consists of all parcels within a 20-mile radius of a “major economic development project,” defined in the bill as a project that consists of at least \$700 million in private investment and is reasonably expected to improve the economic well-being of the surrounding area. The bill specifies that the grant program is intended to encourage major workforce housing projects in areas of the state that otherwise would not attract such development and to increase home ownership among Ohioans.¹

¹ R.C. 122.635(A)(1) and (4), (B), and (F).

Application

The bill requires the Department of Development to implement and administer the grant program. A subdivision applying for a REDD grant is required to include documentation or other evidence that proves to the Department that the subdivision has, or has imminent plans to, adopt and implement pro-housing development policies and approve a “major workforce housing project” consisting of at least 100 units. A subdivision may apply for a grant in collaboration with another subdivision or with a housing developer.²

The bill provides the following nonexhaustive list of examples of “pro-housing development policies”:

- Having a process in place to increase the rate at which permits for housing developments are reviewed;
- Having a pre-approval process in place for an expedited review of permits for a diverse range of housing developers;
- Subsidizing or decreasing costs related to water or sewer connections and extensions for major workforce housing projects;
- Acquiring and readying sites that are ready to be financed and built upon by developers;
- Reducing or eliminating impact, inspection, and plan review fees for housing developers;
- Adopting a zoning plan that includes promoting higher density, small lot size, and minimum setback requirements;
- Developing a comprehensive plan that promotes diverse residential development options;
- Having no or minimal parking requirements for developments that include residential units;
- Conducting a traffic study, improving water or sewer infrastructure, improving roads, or permitting both rigid and flexible pavement types;
- Developing partnerships to expand the provision of sewer and water services to new areas;
- Promoting the use of nontraditional building structures such as modular or manufactured homes.³

Review

The bill requires the Department to review applications and award grants on a rolling basis, using scoring mechanisms that give preference to applicants that adopt more pro-housing

² R.C. 122.635(A)(2) and (B).

³ R.C. 122.635(A)(3).

development policies, in both quantity and impact, and that allow for higher density, smaller lot size, smaller or no side yard setbacks, and minimal open space. The bill also authorizes the Director of Development to adopt rules addressing application procedures, scoring metrics, grant distribution, and state model zoning plans.⁴

Award

A REDD grant must be used to provide capital for housing development through grants or loans, acquire and ready sites for development, provide financial assistance for housing-related infrastructure projects, address additional service or public safety needs due to increases in population, or for other purposes deemed appropriate by the Director. If, at the time the grant application is submitted, the subdivision has not yet adopted the pro-housing policies or approved the major workforce housing project described in the application, the Department must confirm that the subdivision follows through with those plans before disbursing grant funds.⁵

Funding

The bill establishes the Housing Accelerator Fund in the state treasury, consisting of money appropriated to it by the General Assembly. The money in the fund may only be used to provide grants under the bill. The bill does not include an appropriation, so no REDD grants can be awarded without additional legislation to fund the program.⁶

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	04-29-25

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⁴ R.C. 122.635(C) and (E).

⁵ R.C. 122.635(D).

⁶ R.C. 122.634.