



**County  
Commissioners  
Association of Ohio**

*Serving Ohio Counties Since 1880*

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On behalf of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, thank you for this opportunity to provide comments regarding the 2015 Local Impact Statement Report. As you note in the report, various bills are exempted from the LIS requirement. Consequently, the Local Impact Statement Report does not accurately capture the impact of state policy decisions on local governments.

Primary among those exemptions is HB 64, the state's biennial budget bill, which, in addition to serving as a vehicle for the state funding plan, also tends to contain tax policy changes that impact county revenues. CCAO would like to note several important provisions included in HB 64 which positively impact county government. Additional funding to reimburse counties for indigent defense costs will bring the reimbursement rate near 50% for the first time in over 20 years. The administration of elections is a major county responsibility. The budget bill provided funding to assist counties with the purchase of electronic poll books and eliminated the February special election. Local Government Safety Capital Grant Program was established as a new program to assist counties and other local governments in acquiring vehicles, equipment, facilities, or systems needed to enhance public safety. A significant element of this state budget also focused upon remediating drug and alcohol dependency and providing mental health care for individuals involved in the county administered criminal justice system.

Two of the four legislative Acts listed in this 2015 report are identified because they alter state tax policy (H.B. 19 and S.B. 208). Both Impact Statements readily acknowledge that tax policy changes effect the revenue flowing into the state's general revenue fund and thereby the allocation to the Local Government Fund (LGF). Because 1.66% of state general fund revenues are transferred to the LGF, any fluctuation in the state's general fund receipts has a corresponding impact upon the amount of funding counties receive from the LGF. For counties the LGF represents an important source of flexible funding to pay for various state-mandated programs and services counties are required to provide.

It must be remembered that counties are uniquely tied to the state as the provider of state services at the local level on the state's behalf. The vitality and viability of this state/county partnership is directly impacted through all actions of the General Assembly. Therefore, CCAO urges the General Assembly to review **all** legislation enacted for its impact upon Ohio's local governments through the LIS process. Only then will the General Assembly and the public receive the true picture of the impacts that unfunded mandates and policy decisions have upon the counties and other local governments.

CCAO thanks the Legislative Service Commission for the opportunity to comment on this report and wishes to acknowledge the long standing professionalism and expertise of the LSC staff.



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