



## **Brownfield Revitalization Tops GOPC Budget Priorities List**

Greater Ohio Policy Center's (GOPC) highest priority for the FY22-23 operating budget will be securing a policy change dedicating millions of dollars for the redevelopment of brownfields, GOPC Strategic Engagement Director Jason Warner said Friday.

"First and foremost is our ongoing effort to get funding for the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund," Warner said during a budget webinar, responding to a question from Hannah News.

"It was a very successful program, GOPC found. During the life of that program, which ran from 2002 to 2013, it provided a four to one return on investment, and annually contributed almost \$1 billion to the state's gross domestic product," Warner said. "It was a very highly successful program that was able to clean up and remediate hundreds of brownfield sites across the state of Ohio."

Warner said that funding was cut off after the creation of quasi-public development nonprofit JobsOhio, which uses funding from the state's liquor profits.

"They do have brownfield funding that is available through JobsOhio, but in keeping with their mission, they provide loans to businesses that meet certain job creation metrics. We support that, and while that is very important, unfortunately what is not available is funding for communities to revitalize brownfields that there is no designated end user for right now," Warner said.

"We see, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there's a very high degree of likelihood that there's going to be a lot of job reshoring that is taking place. We've heard a lot of discussion about this over the course of the last year -- whether it be the challenges that we had earlier in the pandemic with manufacturing ventilators, or other manufacturing that was impacted by the fact that a lot of it was happening overseas, and the delays and logistics that occurred as a result of the pandemic," Warner continued. "There is a very high degree of likelihood that job reshoring is something that is going to be taking place, probably over the next five to 10 years. Funding of something like Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund would provide Ohio with the necessary resources to be able to begin the process of remediating some of these brownfield sites. We would have a head start on some of our neighboring states in being able to compete for those jobs once they start looking for places to locate in Ohio."

GOPC was a proponent of Clean Ohio bill 133-HB675 (Hillyer-Swearingen), which was introduced in May 2020 but never got any traction.

Dedicating more than \$40 million in liquor profits to fund the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund is one of the planks of GOPC's 2021 policy platform, which was announced earlier this month. Warner also said his organization will likely seek budget language extending the pandemic municipal tax law provisions of 133-HB197 (Powell-Merrin) through March 2023. Warner also reiterated GOPC's position advocating for public transit funding in the state transportation budget. (See The Hannah Report, 1/13/21.)

Asked how the state budget should provide pandemic relief, Warner said further rent and mortgage relief is probably the organization's top priority there. Warner said he expects most coronavirus-related financial relief to come from the federal government, where the Biden

administration and Democratic congressional leaders are working on a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package.

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