



**Ohio Environmental Council**  
[Action Fund]

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

To: Members of the Ohio Senate  
From: Pete Bucher, Chief of Staff, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund  
Re: Senate Bill 137

Dear Honorable Senators,

I am writing to inform you that the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund will be scoring Senate Bill 137 (SB 137) for the purposes of our Legislative Scorecard for the 135th Ohio General Assembly. **We urge a no vote on SB 137.** To the extent that this bill passes, the OEC Action Fund will be doing extensive public education on the content and the votes on this legislation due to its restrictions on how local governments run their elections.

Local communities make a variety of decisions regarding how they structure their city councils, mayor races, and other elected offices, basing those decisions on the needs and wants of their constituents. Take for example, the Main Street Corridor right here in Central Ohio. Columbus' City Council is made up of 9 district representatives. However, the entire city votes on the representatives for each district. Bexley has a 7 member, at-large council. Whitehall has a city council of 8 members: 4 ward members, 3 at large, and a council president. Ward members are selected only by residents of that ward. In a 9 mile stretch of Central Ohio road, there are 4 distinct municipal governments with unique makeups (to say nothing of townships). These at large seats are chosen by a "Choose up to 3 candidates" selection model.

Cuyahoga County also has a more complex county government, with an executive, while other counties have chosen to utilize different representative systems with county commissioners. All around, such diversity makes Ohio's communities truly special. If a community in Ohio wants to explore an alternative voting system like Ranked Choice Voting, that community would simply be leaning into the power of such diversity with their democracy processes.

Local governments should not be penalized for choosing to utilize an alternative election system like Ranked Choice Voting, a system utilized successfully in a variety of communities across the country. While to our knowledge, no communities in Ohio have adopted Ranked Choice Voting, if a community were to consider it for their own elections, they shouldn't have financial penalties hanging over their head when making that decision.

Please, do not restrict the ability of Ohioans to choose the best leaders for their communities by making them choose between a voting method that might be better for their community and the financial security of those same communities. **We urge you to vote no on SB 137.**

If you have any questions, please direct them to Spencer Dirrig at [sdirrig@theoec.org](mailto:sdirrig@theoec.org).

Sincerely,

Pete Bucher  
Interim President OEC Action Fund