



Jan 07, 2025

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Authors:

[Scott D. Phillips](#)

[Jonathan E. Roach](#)

[Robert J. Mumma](#)

New Ohio Law Strengthens Townships' Zoning Enforcement and Historic Preservation Powers

Governor Mike DeWine signed House Bill 315 into law Jan. 2, 2025. This law makes multiple changes for Ohio townships, a brief overview of which is provided below.

Violations of a Township's Zoning Resolution Enforceable by Civil Fine

H.B. 315 expands a township's right to recover fines against people violating township laws. Before H.B. 315's passage, some Ohio courts held that the fine described in Ohio Revised Code 519.99 was strictly limited to criminal causes of action and could not be enforced civilly. H.B. 315 changes R.C. 519.99 to explicitly permit townships to enforce this penalty in a civil action. H.B. 315 also permits a township to combine a cause of action for collection of civil fines with causes of action for injunction, abatement, mandamus, or other relief under R.C. 519.24. This represents a major change to township zoning enforcement, providing townships with more leverage to enforce their resolutions.

Fees for Qualifying Event Venues in the Township

H.B. 315 creates R.C. 503.54, which permits a township, through passage of a resolution, to impose a fee upon the sale of admission to any "qualifying event venue" in the township. To be a "qualifying event venue," (1) the venue must have a capacity of at least 2,000 attendees, and (2) the venue and the land upon which it is situated must be exempt from property taxation.

Change in Notice Requirements

Townships can now meet statutory notice requirements by posting on (1) the print or digital publication of a newspaper of general circulation in the township; (2) Ohio's official public notice site; or

(3) the website and social media account of the township. Previously, notice requirements could only be met through publishing the notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the township.

Township Preservation Commission

Township trustees may, by resolution, establish a township preservation commission. Such a commission would consist of seven members, all appointed by the township trustees. The commission would be tasked with designating properties as “historic” and prohibit persons from altering the exterior of the property without first obtaining a certificate from the commission.

If you have any questions about the impact of these changes, please contact the authors or any attorney with Frost Brown Todd's [Government Services Practice](#).

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