



Ohio Revised Code

Section 307.696 Agreement for sales tax levy and bond issuance to construct and operate a sports facility.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "County taxes" means taxes levied by the county pursuant to sections 307.697, 4301.421, 5743.024, 5743.323, 5743.511, 5743.521, 5743.621, and 5743.631 of the Revised Code.

(2) "Corporation" means either of the following:

(a) A nonprofit corporation that is organized under the laws of this state for the purposes of operating or constructing and operating a sports facility in the county and that may also be organized under the laws of this state for the additional purposes of conducting redevelopment and economic development activities within the host municipal corporation;

(b) A new community authority as defined in section 349.01 of the Revised Code.

(3) "Sports facility" means a sports facility that is intended to house major league professional athletic teams, including a stadium, together with all parking facilities, walkways, and other auxiliary facilities, real and personal property, property rights, easements, and interests that may be appropriate for, or used in connection with, the operation of the facility.

(4) "Construction" includes, but is not limited to, providing fixtures, furnishings, and equipment and providing for capital repairs and improvements.

(5) "Debt service charges" means the interest, principal, premium, if any, carrying and redemption charges, and expenses on bonds issued by either the county or the corporation to:

(a) Construct a sports facility or provide for related redevelopment or economic development as provided in this section;



(b) Acquire real and personal property, property rights, easements, or interests that may be appropriate for, or used in connection with, the operation of the facility; and

(c) Make site improvements to real property, including, but not limited to, demolition, excavation, and installation of footers, pilings, and foundations.

(6) "Host municipal corporation" means the municipal corporation within the boundaries of which the sports facility is located.

(B) A board of county commissioners of a county that levies a tax under section 307.697, 4301.421, or 5743.024 of the Revised Code may enter into an agreement with a corporation operating in the county, and, if there is a host municipal corporation all or a part of which is located in the county, shall enter into an agreement with a corporation operating in the county and the host municipal corporation, under which:

(1)(a) The corporation agrees to construct and operate a sports facility in the county and to pledge and contribute all or any part of the revenues derived from its operation, as specified in the agreement, for the purposes described in division (C)(1) of this section; and

(b) The board agrees to levy county taxes and pledge and contribute any part or all of the revenues therefrom, as specified in the agreement, for the purposes described in division (C)(1) of this section; or

(2)(a) The corporation agrees to operate a sports facility constructed by the county and to pledge and contribute all or any part of the revenues derived from its operation, as specified in the agreement, for the purposes described in division (C)(2) of this section; and

(b) The board agrees to issue revenue bonds of the county, use the proceeds from the sale of the bonds to construct a sports facility in the county, and to levy county taxes and pledge and contribute all or any part of the revenues therefrom, as specified in the agreement, for the purposes described in division (C)(2) of this section; and, if applicable



(3) The host municipal corporation agrees to expend the unused pledges and contributions and surplus revenues as described in divisions (C)(1) and (2) of this section for redevelopment and economic development purposes related to the sports facility.

(C)(1) The primary purpose of the pledges and contributions described in division (B)(1) of this section is payment of debt service charges. To the extent the pledges and contributions are not used by the county or corporation for payment of debt service charges, the county or corporation, pursuant to the agreement provided for in division (B) of this section, shall provide the unused pledges and contributions, together with surplus revenues of the sports facility not needed for debt service charges or the operation and maintenance of the sports facility, to the host municipal corporation, or a nonprofit corporation, which may be the corporation acting on behalf of the host municipal corporation, for redevelopment and economic development purposes related to the sports facility. If the county taxes are also levied for the purpose of making permanent improvements, the agreement shall include a schedule of annual pledges and contributions by the county for the payment of debt service charges. The county's pledge and contribution provided for in the agreement shall be for the period stated in the agreement but not to exceed twenty years. The agreement shall provide that any such bonds and notes shall be secured by a trust agreement between the corporation or other bond issuer and a corporate trustee that is a trust company or bank having the powers of a trust company within or without the state, and the trust agreement shall pledge or assign to the retirement of the bonds or notes, all moneys paid by the county for that purpose under this section. A county tax, all or any part of the revenues from which are pledged under an agreement entered into by a board of county commissioners under this section shall not be subject to diminution by initiative or referendum, or diminution by statute, unless provision is made therein for an adequate substitute therefor reasonably satisfactory to the trustee under the trust agreement that secures the bonds and notes.

(2) The primary purpose of the pledges and contributions described in division (B)(2) of this section is payment of debt service charges. To the extent the pledges and contributions are not used by the county for payment of debt service charges, the county or corporation, pursuant to the agreement provided for in division (B) of this section, shall provide the unused pledges and contributions, together with surplus revenues of the sports facility not needed for debt service charges or the operation and maintenance of the sports facility, to the host municipal corporation, or a nonprofit corporation, which may be the corporation, acting on behalf of the host municipal corporation, for



redevelopment and economic development purposes related to the sports facility. The corporation's pledge and contribution provided for in the agreement shall be until all of the bonds issued for the construction of the facility have been retired.

(D) A pledge of money by a county under this section shall not be indebtedness of the county for purposes of Chapter 133. of the Revised Code.

(E) If the terms of the agreement so provide, the board of county commissioners may acquire, make site improvements to, including, but not limited to, demolition, excavation, and installation of footers, pilings, and foundations, and lease real property for the sports facility to a corporation that constructs a sports facility under division (B)(1) of this section. The agreement shall specify the term, which shall not exceed thirty years and shall be on such terms as are set forth in the agreement. The purchase, improvement, and lease may be the subject of an agreement between the county and a municipal corporation located within the county pursuant to section 153.61 or 307.15 of the Revised Code, and are not subject to the limitations of sections 307.02 and 307.09 of the Revised Code.

(F) The corporation shall not enter into any construction contract or contract for the purchase of services for use in connection with the construction of a sports facility prior to the corporation's adoption and implementation of a policy on the set aside of contracts for bidding by or award to minority business enterprises, as defined in division (E)(1) of section 122.71 of the Revised Code. Sections 4115.03 to 4115.16 of the Revised Code apply to a sports facility constructed under this section.

(G) Not more than one-half of the total costs, including debt service charges and cost of operation, of a project undertaken pursuant to an agreement entered into under division (B) of this section shall be paid from county taxes. Nothing in this section authorizes the use of revenues from county taxes or proceeds from the sale of bonds issued by the board of county commissioners for payment of costs of operation of a sports facility.

(H) Division (G) of this section and the twenty-year limitation prescribed in division (C)(1) of this section do not apply in the case of taxes levied pursuant to division (E) of section 307.697 of the Revised Code, division (C) of section 4301.421 of the Revised Code, division (D) of section 5743.024 of the Revised Code, division (C) of section 5743.323 of the Revised Code, and sections



5743.511, 5743.521, 5743.621, and 5743.631 of the Revised Code. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section or any other section of the Revised Code, revenue from the taxes levied pursuant to those provisions shall be equally divided by the county among the sports facilities that exist within the boundaries of the county during the period that the taxes are levied. Unless documented by an agreement with the applicable owner of a sports facility, such division of revenue shall be made directly by the county treasurer by payment to the respective owners of the sports facilities.