



Ohio Revised Code

Section 715.691 Alternative procedures and requirements for creating joint economic development zone.

Effective: October 3, 2023

Legislation: House Bill 33

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "Contracting party" means a municipal corporation that has entered into a joint economic development zone contract or any party succeeding to the municipal corporation, or a township that entered into a joint economic development zone contract with a municipal corporation.

(2) "Zone" means a joint economic development zone designated under this section.

(3) "Substantial amendment" means an amendment to a joint economic development zone contract that increases the rate of municipal income tax that may be imposed within the zone, changes the purposes for which municipal income tax revenue derived from the zone may be used, or adds new territory to the zone.

(B) This section provides procedures and requirements for creating and operating a joint economic development zone. This section applies only if one of the contracting parties to the zone does not levy a municipal income tax under Chapter 718. of the Revised Code.

At any time before January 1, 2015, two or more municipal corporations or one or more townships and one or more municipal corporations may enter into a contract whereby they agree to share in the costs of improvements for an area or areas located in one or more of the contracting parties that they designate as a joint economic development zone for the purpose of facilitating new or expanded growth for commercial or economic development in the state. The contract and zone shall meet the requirements of divisions (B) to (J) of this section.

(C) The contract shall set forth each contracting party's contribution to the joint economic development zone. The contributions may be in any form that the contracting parties agree to, and may include, but are not limited to, the provision of services, money, or equipment. The contract



may be amended, renewed, or terminated with the consent of the contracting parties, subject to division (K) of this section. The contract shall continue in existence throughout the term it specifies and shall be binding on the contracting parties and on any entities succeeding to the contracting parties. If the contract is approved by the electors of any contracting party under division (F) of this section or substantially amended after the effective date of H.B. 289 of the 130th general assembly, June 5, 2014, the contracting parties shall include within the contract or the amendment to the contract an economic development plan for the zone, a schedule for the implementation or provision of any new, expanded, or additional services, facilities, or improvements within the zone or in the area surrounding the zone, and any provisions necessary for the contracting parties to create a joint economic development review council in compliance with section 715.692 of the Revised Code.

(D) Before the legislative authority of any of the contracting parties enacts an ordinance or resolution approving a contract to designate a joint economic development zone, the legislative authority of each of the contracting parties shall hold a public hearing concerning the contract and zone. Each legislative authority shall provide at least thirty days' public notice of the time and place of the public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipal corporation or township. During the thirty-day period prior to the public hearing, all of the following documents shall be available for public inspection in the office of the clerk of the legislative authority of a municipal corporation that is a contracting party and in the office of the fiscal officer of a township that is a contracting party:

- (1) A copy of the contract designating the zone;
- (2) A description of the area or areas to be included in the zone, including a map in sufficient detail to denote the specific boundaries of the area or areas;
- (3) An economic development plan for the zone that includes a schedule for the provision of any new, expanded, or additional services, facilities, or improvements.

A public hearing held under division (D) of this section shall allow for public comment and recommendations on the contract and zone. The contracting parties may include in the contract any of those recommendations prior to approval of the contract.

(E) After the public hearings required under division (D) of this section have been held and the



economic development plan has been approved under division (D) of section 715.692 of the Revised Code, and before January 1, 2015, each contracting party may enact an ordinance or resolution approving the contract to designate a joint economic development zone. After each contracting party has enacted an ordinance or resolution, the clerk of the legislative authority of a municipal corporation that is a contracting party and the fiscal officer of a township that is a contracting party shall file with the board of elections of each county within which a contracting party is located a copy of the ordinance or resolution approving the contract and shall direct the board of elections to submit the ordinance or resolution to the electors of the contracting party on the day of the next general, primary, or special election occurring at least ninety days after the ordinance or resolution is filed with the board of elections. If any of the contracting parties is a township, however, then only the township or townships shall submit the resolution to the electors. The board of elections shall not submit an ordinance or resolution filed under this division to the electors at any election occurring on or after January 1, 2015.

(F)(1) If a vote is required to approve a municipal corporation as a contracting party to a joint economic development zone under this section, the ballot shall be in the following form:

"Shall the ordinance of the legislative authority of the (city or village) of (name of contracting party) approving the contract with (name of each other contracting party) for the designation of a joint economic development zone be approved?"

	FOR THE ORDINANCE AND CONTRACT	
	AGAINST THE ORDINANCE AND CONTRACT	

"

(2) If a vote is required to approve a township as a contracting party to a joint economic development zone under this section, the ballot shall be in the following form:

"Shall the resolution of the board of township trustees of the township of (name of contracting party) approving the contract with (name of each other contracting party) for the designation of a joint economic development zone be approved?"



	FOR THE ORDINANCE AND CONTRACT	
	AGAINST THE ORDINANCE AND CONTRACT	

"

If a majority of the electors of each contracting party voting on the issue vote for the ordinance or resolution and contract, the ordinance or resolution shall become effective immediately and the contract shall go into effect immediately or in accordance with its terms.

(G)(1) A board of directors shall govern each joint economic development zone created under this section. The members of the board shall be appointed as provided in the contract. Each of the contracting parties shall appoint three members to the board. Terms for each member shall be for two years, each term ending on the same day of the month of the year as did the term that it succeeds. A member may be reappointed to the board.

(2) Membership on the board is not the holding of a public office or employment within the meaning of any section of the Revised Code or any charter provision prohibiting the holding of other public office or employment. Membership on the board is not a direct or indirect interest in a contract or expenditure of money by a municipal corporation, township, county, or other political subdivision with which a member may be affiliated. Notwithstanding any provision of law or a charter to the contrary, no member of the board shall forfeit or be disqualified from holding any public office or employment by reason of membership on the board.

(3) The board is a public body for the purposes of section 121.22 of the Revised Code. Chapter 2744. of the Revised Code applies to the board and the zone.

(H) The contract may grant to the board of directors appointed under division (G) of this section the power to adopt a resolution to levy an income tax within the zone. The income tax shall be used for the purposes of the zone and for the purposes of the contracting parties pursuant to the contract. Not less than fifty per cent of the revenue from the tax shall be used solely to provide the new, expanded, or additional services, facilities, or improvements specified in the economic development plan until all such services, facilities, or improvements have been completed as specified in that plan. The



income tax may be levied in the zone based on income earned by persons working within the zone and on the net profits of businesses located in the zone. The income tax is subject to Chapter 718. of the Revised Code, except that a vote shall be required by the electors residing in the zone to approve the rate of income tax unless a majority of the electors residing within the zone, as determined by the total number of votes cast in the zone for the office of governor at the most recent general election for that office, submit a petition to the board requesting that the election provided for in division (H)(1) of this section not be held. If no electors reside within the zone, then division (H)(3) of this section applies. The rate of the income tax shall be no higher than the highest rate being levied by a municipal corporation that is a party to the contract.

(1) The board of directors may levy an income tax at a rate that is not higher than the highest rate being levied by a municipal corporation that is a party to the contract, provided that the rate of the income tax is first submitted to and approved by the electors of the zone at the succeeding regular or primary election, or a special election called by the board, occurring subsequent to ninety days after a certified copy of the resolution levying the income tax and calling for the election is filed with the board of elections. If the voters approve the levy of the income tax, the income tax shall be in force for the full period of the contract establishing the zone. No election shall be held under this section if a majority of the electors residing within the zone, determined as specified in division (H) of this section, submit a petition to that effect to the board of directors. Any increase in the rate of an income tax by the board of directors shall be approved by a vote of the electors of the zone and shall be in force for the remaining period of the contract establishing the zone.

(2) Whenever a zone is located in the territory of more than one contracting party, a majority vote of the electors in each of the several portions of the territory of the contracting parties constituting the zone approving the levy of the tax is required before it may be imposed under division (H) of this section.

(3) If no electors reside in the zone, no election for the approval or rejection of an income tax shall be held under this section, provided that where no electors reside in the zone, the rate of the income tax shall be no higher than the highest rate being levied by a municipal corporation that is a party to the contract.

(4) The board of directors of a zone levying an income tax shall enter into an agreement with one of



the municipal corporations that is a party to the contract to administer, collect, and enforce the income tax on behalf of the zone.

(5) The board of directors of a zone shall publish or post public notice of any resolution adopted levying an income tax in a newspaper of general circulation within the zone once a week for two consecutive weeks or as provided in section 7.16 of the Revised Code, before the resolution takes effect. In zones in which no newspaper is generally circulated, notice shall be accomplished by posting copies in not less than five of the most public places in the district, as determined by the board of directors, for a period of not less than fifteen days before the effective date of the resolution.

(I)(1) If for any reason a contracting party reverts to or has its boundaries changed so that it is classified as a township that is the entity succeeding to that contracting party, the township is considered to be a municipal corporation for the purposes of the contract for the full period of the contract establishing the joint economic development zone, except that if that contracting party is administering, collecting, and enforcing the income tax on behalf of the district as provided in division (H)(4) of this section, the contract shall be amended to allow one of the other contracting parties to administer, collect, and enforce that tax.

(2) Notwithstanding any other section of the Revised Code, if there is any change in the boundaries of a township so that a municipal corporation once located within the township is no longer so located, the township shall remain in existence even though its remaining unincorporated area contains less than twenty-two square miles, if the township has been or becomes a party to a contract creating a joint economic development zone under this section or the contract creating that joint economic development zone under this section is terminated or repudiated for any reason by any party or person. The township shall continue its existing status in all respects, including having the same form of government and the same elected board of trustees as its governing body. The township shall continue to receive all of its tax levies and sources of income as a township in accordance with any section of the Revised Code, whether the levies and sources of income generate millage within the ten-mill limitation or in excess of the ten-mill limitation. The name of the township may be changed to the name of the contracting party appearing in the contract creating a joint economic development zone under this section, so long as the name does not conflict with any other name in the state that has been certified by the secretary of state. The township shall have all of



the powers set out in sections 715.79, 715.80, and 715.81 of the Revised Code.

(J) If, after creating and operating a joint economic development zone under this section, a contracting party that did not levy a municipal income tax under Chapter 718. of the Revised Code levies such a tax, the tax shall not apply to the zone for the full period of the contract establishing the zone if the board of directors of the zone has levied an income tax as provided in division (H) of this section.

(K) No substantial amendment may be made to any joint economic development zone contract after December 31, 2014.