Testimony Andrew Barlow, CPP
March 11, 2015
House Bill 64 (HB64)
On behalf of the Ohio Parking Association (OPA)

To the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee
Chairman McClain
Vice Chairman Scherer
Ranking Member Cera

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today on behalf of the Ohio Parking Association (OPA) of which I am the immediate past president. The OPA is comprised of both commercial and public operators (and our suppliers and vendors) providing parking for office buildings, convention centers, sports stadiums and arenas, medical complexes, hotels and restaurants, theatres, shopping centers, etc.

My name is Andy Barlow and am a lifelong resident of Ohio, residing just outside of Cincinnati in Green Township. I have been in the parking industry for twenty years and am quite involved in both the parking industry and the revitalization of downtown Cincinnati. Currently, I serve on the President’s Advisory Board and the Certification Board of the National Parking Association (NPA) and am Vice Chair of the Downtown Cincinnati Improvement District (DCID). Additionally I am a twelve year member of the Cincinnati Building Owner’s and Manager’s Association (BOMA) having just completed 5 years on the Executive Board.

As the committee considers House Bill 64 (HB 64), I would ask that you give special consideration to some of the troubling tax provisions in HB 64, and most particularly the proposed taxation on parking revenues.

Many of our great cities are only now beginning to show real signs of rebound from the economic downturn that began in 2006. As space is at a premium in a downtown environment most of the parking for which a fee is collected directly is downtown. To add a new burden to that recovery will only slow the renaissance which our downtowns are beginning to enjoy. Companies and individuals are reversing the history of “urban flight” and choosing to move back downtown; we cannot afford to impede this revitalization.

The taxation of parking revenues has been repeatedly proven in other states to be a detriment to real growth and economic expansion, and as previously stated one that primarily impacts urban centers. However, such taxation also has deleterious effects on convention centers, sports stadiums and arenas, medical complexes, hotels and restaurants, building owners, theatres, shopping centers, and so much more. To the extent possible a tax on parking revenues will be passed on to the consumer placing additional strain on the budgets of middle class Ohioans who have little choice in their daily commute to work.

Additionally any tax should be fairly applied. How could a tax be fairly applied and collected on locations where a fee is not collected directly for parking: such as parking for employees being supplied as part of an office lease, or parking being supplied for customers in a connected lot as part of a retail lease?

Clearly the proposed taxation on parking revenues as part of HB 64 is a regressive action by its very nature. We appeal to your good judgment and urge you to reject the sales tax expansion that is proposed in HB 64. It is better that we work instead to find ways to drive economic development and new housing in our cities, and encourage people to enjoy the many benefits that our cities offer.

Thank you for your consideration and I am happy to answer questions.