

House to sweeten pot to lure retailer Piggyback sales tax dangled as incentive

March 18, 2006

By JIM PROVANCE

BLADE COLUMBUS BUREAU

COLUMBUS - Sporting goods super-retailer Bass Pro Shops would get back 75 cents of every \$1 paid in county sales taxes if it locates in Wood County - or anywhere else in Ohio - under a bill expected to clear the Ohio House next week..

"This isn't good public policy," said Zach Schiller, senior researcher for Policy Matters Ohio, a nonprofit research group in Cleveland that focuses on the economy from a lower to middle-class perspective.

"Giving tax breaks for retailing, in general, is something I'd want to stay away from," he said. "For one thing, is it really going to generate enough business conceivably to be worthwhile, to pay for the additional public services, for the extra people, and the extra traffic on the roads?"

"How will it affect other retailers?" he asked. "I'm not a close student of this industry in northwest Ohio, but I'm sure there are existing retailers that sell these products. What if Cabela's decided to locate in Bowling Green? Are we going to give them the same treatment so that this continues on forever?"