



Testimony in Support of SB 315

Akshai Singh: Cleveland Heights resident, member Clevelanders for Public Transit

I am writing to voice my support for SB 315, which is currently being considered by the Ohio House of Representatives. While I applaud \$8.8 million in new state funding for public transit, it is my understanding that all but \$2 million of that is slated to go to rural areas. It's a positive start as the Ohio Department of Transportation's "Statewide Transit Needs Study" demonstrates that all transit systems in our state are suffering from funding shortfalls, but it is not enough. \$2 million split up between many transit systems, such as the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) will not help keep Ohio's urban transit systems running safely, equitably, and reliably for years to come.

With an investment of just \$.63 cents per capita coming from the state of Ohio, it's only a matter of time before transit systems statewide begin to feel the same kind of operating budget woes GCRTA is now facing. In response to a \$7 million budget shortfall, GCRTA is proposing significant fare increases over the next 3 years, in addition to service cuts to bus lines that will decrease ridership and fare revenue. These changes will make getting to work, school and running errands harder for many people in Cleveland. Transit systems in Cincinnati, Columbus, and Ohio's other major cities will likely face similar problems if more state money is not funneled into our ailing urban transit systems.

I'm writing to urge leadership of the Ohio House of Representatives to propose an amendment to increase the level of funding offered by SB 315 as much as possible and send more funds to struggling urban transit systems like GCRTA. Without such legislation, transit systems across Ohio may well be forced to make up at least part of these budget shortfalls on the backs of the working poor, elderly, and disabled, if they can't find the funding elsewhere.

I urge you, in the strongest possible terms, not to allow that to happen.

Sincerely,

Akshai Singh
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