



Testimony in Support of SB 315

Rich Raphael, Cleveland resident, member Clevelanders for Public Transit, daily transit rider

I am writing to call your attention to SB 315, which I understand is up for consideration in the Ohio House very soon. While I do applaud 8.8 million dollars in new state funding for public transit, it is my understanding that all but 2 million dollars of that is slated to go to rural areas. It's a very positive start, but it is not enough. 2 million dollars split up between many transit systems, such as the Greater Cleveland RTA is not enough. At \$.63 cents per capita, 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. GCRTA is proposing to raise fares by more than 10 percent and to cut 4 percent of transit service. These changes will make getting to work, school and running errands for many people in Cleveland who use transit every day, like I do.

I would urge, hope, and pray that someone in the Ohio House 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 the Greater Cleveland RTA, which is currently experiencing a \$7 million operating budget deficit. 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.

Respectfully,

Rich Raphael