



**Director Lydia L. Mihalik
Ohio Development Services Agency
Ohio House Finance Committee
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Chairman Oelslager, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 62, the Transportation budget. My name is Lydia Mihalik, and I am the Director of the Ohio Development Services Agency.

It is such an honor to serve in the cabinet of Governor DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Husted. I am a proud graduate of the University of Findlay, and my career has been focused on public service, including serving as Mayor of the City of Findlay.

During my time as Mayor, I learned first-hand how partnerships can lead to better results than anyone can achieve alone. At Development, collaboration is key to many of our programs.

The Transportation Budget contains funding for one such program: the Roadwork Development, or “629,” Grant. This program is a great tool for us to work with local government partners on economic development projects.

When a business is interested in locating or expanding in a community, it brings excitement. New jobs are on the horizon. The next question on every local official’s mind is “how can I help?”

We have to work together to leverage resources at the state and local level to maximize our competitiveness while continuing to grow our economy. It is so important to partner with our stakeholders to create an environment conducive for investment.

That is where the Roadwork Development Grant can play a role. Working with ODOT and JobsOhio, the Development Services Agency assists local governments with road improvement projects directly connected to business investment. This funding can pay for widening, paving, construction, and right-of-way infrastructure improvements, normally up to 50 percent of public roadwork costs.

House Bill 62 funds this program at \$15.2 million in each year of the biennium. All dollars must be spent on public roadways, and each grant must be approved by the Controlling Board.

Successful projects have been funded all over the state.

For example, Rocla Concrete Tie was expanding its manufacturing business and adding new jobs in the City of Portsmouth. It was crucial, however, for the road next to their facility to be reconstructed and widened for heavy tractor trailer use. Development provided a Roadwork Development Grant to complete the project, which had the side effect of providing better access for both the company and local residents to the brand new Southern Ohio Veterans Memorial Highway.

Another example is the Flats East Development in the City of Cleveland. The project is a mixed-use development with retail, entertainment, and residential components. The Development Services Agency provided a portion of project funding to reconstruct Front Avenue, West 11th Street, and Old River Road. This roadwork funding helped make the project possible.

Funding these critical infrastructure improvements is one way state government can support our local government partners to invest in Ohio – together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I would be happy to answer any questions.