



## ***MOVE Ohio!***

### **Mobility & Opportunity for a Vibrant Economy in Ohio**

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**Testimony of Stu Nicholson  
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Spokesperson / MOVE Ohio  
To the Ohio House Finance Committee**

Members of the Committee. Thank you for your time.

I am Stu Nicholson and I speak on behalf of MOVE Ohio and the millions of Ohio who depend on or choose to use public transit, bicycle or walk to connect with jobs, education, health care and whatever their other daily needs may be. And these numbers are demographically growing.

But what is also growing is the gap in per capita investment in public transportation between the State of Ohio and our neighboring states.

While Ohio's per capita spending has gone from 0.67 cents per capita in 2015 down to 0.60 cents in 2016....according to the US DOT and the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials..... our neighbors, with the exception of Kentucky and West Virginia have all INCREASED their investment.

- Pennsylvania has gone from \$89.16 per capita to \$128.83....that's **200% times more than Ohio** and we are similar states in terms of total population
- Indiana has gone from \$6.35 per capita to \$9.41..... **15-times greater than Ohio** and in an arguably very fiscally conservative state.
- And in that State Up North..... per capita investment in public transit has risen from \$9.92 to \$26.78..... **45 times greater than Ohio.**

But what does this mean beyond dollars per capita?

It means even the most well-meaning steps this General Assembly or the current Administration may take on issues from business & job development to access to education and

health care..... the lack of investment in transportation options beyond the highways, streets and bridges does not and cannot work as well if Ohioans “can’t get there from here.”

Neither can Ohio businesses grow as well, if they can’t connect with the widest and deepest labor pool that’s possible.

Neither can companies looking to locate in Ohio. Often high on their list is the availability of a robust, fully-arrayed transportation portfolio, which again connects them with Ohio’s workforce.

I know this from my experience working for both a major Ohio transit system as well as 7-plus years with the Ohio Rail Development Commission.

MOVE Ohio supports funding for better, safer highways and bridges..... a “fix it first” transportation budget, if you will. But decades of gross underfunding and even cuts to public transportation funding are hurting not just Ohio’s citizens, but our economy and the potential to grow business and jobs.

The \$7-million dollars for transit in the proposed ODOT budget comes from already flexible Federal funds. This “increase” is almost cynically small. In fact, if Ohio transit systems must pay the increase in the fuels tax, that will reduce that \$7-million by an estimated \$2.5-million dollars.

A new city bus costs around \$600-thousand dollars.

MOVE Ohio believes Ohio must invest, at minimum, \$150-million dollars annually and even that will not answer all of our transit and active transportation needs. May I remind this committee that ODOT itself recommend an annual funding level of \$120-million in it’s 2015 Statewide Transit Needs Report. It also recommended greater transit spending levels up through 2025.

Again, we understand the need to fund state and local highways and bridges. But to ignore Ohio’s transit needs again isn’t kicking the can down the road..... it’s throwing the can in the trash bin by the bus stop.

This budget should not be moved forward unless accompanied by or including greater funding for transit.