

House Bill 62
Proponent Testimony – March 6, 2019
Ohio House Finance Committee
Columbus 2020
Kenny McDonald



150 South Front St, Suite 200
Columbus, OH 43215

T (614) 225.6060
columbusregion.com

Chairman Oelslager, Vice-Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for permitting me to testify as a proponent on behalf of House Bill 62 and the increase in the motor fuel user fee proposed by Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). My name is Kenny McDonald, and I am the President and Chief Economic Officer of Columbus 2020.

Columbus 2020 serves as the economic development organization for the 11-county Columbus Region, working in partnership with state and local partners to generate opportunity and build capacity for economic growth.

The quality of Ohio's transportation systems is directly related to the quality of life of our residents and to the economic competitiveness of our state. As you may know, Ohio has one of the largest and most active transportation systems in the United States and one of the top 25 economies in the world.

The Columbus Region has made great strides in the past decade, as we continue to draw employers and young professionals from around the world. However, this population growth and economic development has come with an increased demand on our roadways. The high traffic volume of passenger vehicles and commercial freight flowing through our state and region everyday supports businesses, provides jobs and ultimately drives Ohio's economy.

This high traffic volume also leads to high traffic congestion. The Texas Transportation Institute estimated that in 2015, the average driver in Columbus suffered 41 hours of delay in their commute annually. The costs of this congestion for each driver was valued at \$933. This meant that the costs of traffic congestion for all commuters in Columbus was \$921 million. This will only become more of an issue with the population of Columbus due to grow by another 500,000 residents and the region by a million over the next 30 years. The shortfall in transportation funding will eliminate new projects designed to add capacity and relieve congestion on roads.

An investment in Ohio's roads is an investment in Ohio's economy. Transportation infrastructure connects residents, businesses and visitors with access to home, jobs, healthcare, recreation and other essential services.

Improvements in infrastructure are also necessary for Ohio's aim to be a leader in technology and innovation. Businesses and people considering a move to our state evaluate us on issues such as the quality of our roadways. They are also interested in how we are investing in our future. Falling behind in this facet will send negative ripples throughout Ohio's economy. The delay of innovative transportation projects will leave our region and our state playing catch up to competitors, impeding job creation.

The Columbus Region is working hard to diversify and minimize its reliance on traditional infrastructure with investments in mass transit, electrification, and smart technologies. The advancement of any of these options is dependent on the region maintaining stable infrastructure. In partnership with the state, Columbus can continue to explore and improve the economic development of the region.

Ohio's transportation infrastructure is a critical aspect to our region's economic growth and our state's overall prosperity. With so much dependent on the quality of our roads, bridges and highways, we must continue to invest in ourselves. The recommendation by Governor DeWine and ODOT to increase the state motor fuel tax is the only solution to the impending funding crisis affecting our roadways, as well as ensuring they will be maintained and improved for years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenny McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end.

KENNY McDONALD, CEcD
President and Chief Economic Officer

Columbus 2020, 150 South Front St, Suite 200 Columbus, OH 43215