



**Ohio Coal Association Testimony – HB 222
Ohio House Ways and Means Committee
Written Testimony**

Chairman Merrin and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony today in support of HB 222. My name is Mike Cope and I am the President of the Ohio Coal Association. The Ohio Coal Association is dedicated to representing the interests of Ohio's underground and surface coal producers. The Ohio Coal Association represents nearly all of Ohio's coal producers and dozens of associate members. Collectively, we represent every aspect of the regional coal industry, including coal production, equipment manufacturing and supply, electric power generation, engineering, coal transportation, blasting and other similar enterprises.

As you can imagine, the coal industry relies heavily on truck drivers, both in our daily operations at our sites, as well as in transporting coal to processing plants. The qualified and trained drivers operating within the industry play a large role in helping insure that Ohio's consumers have access to reliable electricity. Trucks offer an extremely versatile transportation option to our members as they can operate nearly anywhere in Ohio. Nevertheless, the driver shortage has made transporting coal by trucks more difficult than ever.

The Ohio Coal Association supports Ohio's efforts to address the driver shortage facing the trucking industry. The tax credit offered in HB 222 will be used by Ohio's employers to increase training opportunities available to new truck drivers, which will increase the number of qualified CDL holders available to transport coal in Ohio. I would like to thank the bill's sponsors for introducing this important legislation and encourage the entire committee to support HB 222.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Cope", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Cope
President, Ohio Coal Association