



March 12, 2019

Good Afternoon, Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Minority Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce committee,

I am writing today to support Governor Mike DeWine's proposal for an 18 cent per gallon increase in Ohio's gas tax. Ohio's gas tax has not been increased in 14 years. Revenue collected from the tax has been flat at \$ 1.9 billion per year. The Ohio Department of Transportation contends that without such an increase, largescale improvements like the modernization of Cleveland's Innerbelt, the replacement of the Euclid, Chester and Payne Avenue bridges over I-90 and improvements to I-71 from West 25 to I-490 would go unfunded. Cuyahoga County needs a safe, modern highway system. The Ohio House's version of the gas tax falls short of the real need in Cuyahoga County.

Any increase in the gas tax shall be accompanied by a fair distribution system to counties based upon vehicle miles traveled and/or gas purchased. To date, the distribution of gas tax funds have not been fairly divided. There should also include an ongoing index for inflation.

My administration wholeheartedly supports the Ohio House's proposal to set aside \$100 million in funds for public transit. The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GRTA) and many other Ohio transit systems have been in crisis for years. Ohio ranks near the bottom in per capita spending on public transit at 63 cents per person. In 2018 service cuts were made to fifteen routes to keep the system solvent. GRTA links Cuyahoga County residents, especially the most vulnerable, with jobs and education. A vital transit system means opportunity for all Cuyahoga County residents.

As you continue to develop the Transportation Budget, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office for any questions.

Thank you for your continued efforts for all Ohioans!

Sincerely,

Armond Budish
County Executive