



Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
Testimony: Sub HB 62
Chris Kershner
March 13, 2019

Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee, I'm Chris Kershner, Executive Vice President of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce and the appointed representative of the coalition behind me. We stand before you today as the business community of major metropolitan regions in Ohio. Standing here today are executive representatives from the regional chambers of commerce in Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo. Collectively, our organizations represent over 24,000 employers and job creators throughout the State of Ohio.

Knowing that you have a lot of testimony to get through today, we will get right to the point. While we appreciate the House's commitment to new funding dedicated to infrastructure and transit in Sub HB 62, we are concerned that the dedicated roadway funding identified will not be enough to meet the growing economic needs of our regions and allow our economic development communities to support new business growth opportunities.

Last week, the Ohio Department of Transportation issued a 10 year funding forecast based on the revenue projections from the House passed transportation budget. While the House passed budget would provide enough funding for the operations and maintenance of our infrastructure network, it would not provide adequate funding for additional safety and major new construction. To this point, their forecast has major new TRAC funding at \$0 beginning in 2020 under the House passed budget. This means there will be \$0 available to spend on new infrastructure projects and capacity expansion of existing roadways in our regions. As the advocates for the business community we can tell you with 100% confidence, that this funding is essential to new business recruitment and business retention in all regions of the state. Without having this essential economic tool, Ohio will be at an economic disadvantage which will directly impact our ability to support our future business community.

For example, without a funding increase in the Ohio Senate, the following projects could be at serious risk under the current version of Sub HB 62:

- Akron: Summit County I-76, I-77 and St. Rt. 8
- Cincinnati: Replacement of the Western Hills Viaduct
- Cleveland: Improvements to Cleveland Innerbelt Central Interchange and trench
- Columbus: Reconfiguration of the I-70/I-71 split

- Dayton: Widening US 40 to support logistics growth near the Dayton International Airport.
- Toledo: Widening of I-475 and the Interchange at 20A.

The viability of all of these projects and numerous others would be at stake. To keep our state economically competitive, keep our roadways safe and support our future business communities, we respectfully request that you increase available funding so that major new infrastructure construction and additional safety resources can be achieved. We cannot do this by ourselves and we must work as a collective to achieve what we can't be done alone. Ohio is on strong path forward and it is critical that as a state, as a business community, as elected leaders and as a department of transportation, we are able to support the future economic needs of Ohio and keep our roadways safe.

Thank you for your consideration and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.