



**Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
Transportation Budget for FY 2020-2021
HB 62
March 19, 2019**

Good morning Chairman McColley, Vice chair Uecker and ranking minority member Antonio, on behalf of the Ohio Municipal League (OML) and our 750 members, my name is Kent Scarrett and I am the Executive Director of the League and I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the current needs and challenges that Ohio's municipalities face in properly funding transportation infrastructure across the state.

The OML's **2019-2020 Public Policy Agenda** identifies transportation funding as a top priority.

To this end, the OML has been working with our member municipalities on understanding their transportation infrastructure needs. Additionally, we are a member of the Fix Our Roads Ohio coalition, which, as you are familiar, is the banding of stakeholders interested in securing more transportation infrastructure funding at the state and local level.

Ohio's municipalities are home to over 8.5 million citizens and over 80 percent of Ohio businesses. Our roadways provide critical first- and last-mile connections for employment, commerce, social services, culture and recreation, hospitals and healthcare. Our own police, fire, and EMS forces use these roadways to serve our citizens and residents of neighboring communities.

Municipalities maintain over 70,000 lane miles and 2,500 bridges and have an annual count of over 100 million vehicle miles traveled. The most well-traveled portion of this municipal system, about 21,000 lane miles of local connectors and arterials and highways, carry over a quarter of all vehicle miles traveled in Ohio.

Greater investment in the municipal roadway system will promote local, regional and statewide economic vitality and improve safety for the traveling public.

The Challenge

Reports are plenty that show the mismatch between transportation infrastructure needs and funding at the national, state, and local level. Ohio is not immune from this challenge. Recent

testimony contends that ODOT estimates a \$1 billion annual need and estimates range up to \$1 billion annually for locally-maintained roads.

Municipalities invest in a variety of transportation assets, including roadways, curbs and gutters, bridges, sidewalks and pedestrian paths, storm sewers, traffic signals, street lights, public transit systems and airports.

Although municipalities face needs with all of these transportation assets, today we are focusing primarily on roadways and bridges and related investments, such as traffic signal management. This approach is taken because the roadway system is generally the largest area of municipal transportation investment.

As you can imagine, with over 900 independent municipalities in our state, there is not one place to go to document every need and funding source. But it is fair to say, like other units of government, our communities face infrastructure funding challenges.

I want to begin my remarks on Substitute HB 62 by thanking Governor DeWine for his leadership in recognizing the critical need for infrastructure funding for his proposed 18-cent increase to the motor fuel tax, which is supported by the League. We also want to thank the Ohio House of Representatives for passing a version of the bill with multiple provisions supported by the League and by our members. The League stands in support of the as-introduced version of HB 62, with the Governor's proposed motor fuel tax increase of 18 cents.

I will briefly discuss the provisions the League supports as well as several provisions that harm Ohio's cities and villages by encroaching upon their constitutional right to Home Rule.

Provisions Supported by OML

- 1. A \$5 permissive licensing fee for municipalities and townships.**
- 2. \$100 million a year for public transit.**
- 3. A \$200/\$100 motor registration fee for electric/hybrid vehicles with 50% of the revenues generated earmarked for local governments.**
- 4. \$5 million a year from Oil and Gas Well Fund to local governments in the Utica and Marcellus shale region.**
- 5. \$4.5 million a year for Transportation Improvement Districts (TID) facilitating funding for cost of projects with local governments.**
- 6. The creation of Ohio's Road to our Future Joint Legislative Study Committee to study alternative sources of revenues, expense mitigation, evolving technology, innovative finance techniques, asset leverage and conditions, employee demographics and a vehicle-miles traveled approach to transportation funding.**

7. \$250,000 a year allocated to the Catastrophic Snowfall Fund for local governments.

Substitute HB 62 contains several provisions opposed by the League, including three that violate municipal Home Rule:

- 1. The elimination of administrative hearings for traffic citations issued by a traffic camera, the requirement of a municipality filing a traffic citation to pay all court costs and fees.** A recent ruling by the Ohio Supreme Court clarified that it is within a municipality's Home Rule right to operate traffic cameras within their jurisdiction. This provision therefore violates municipal Home Rule, as well as the following provision:
- 2. Mandating that revenues collected from traffic camera citations are reportable and reducing LGF distributions by amount collected from traffic camera citations.** Municipalities should not be punished for exercising their constitutionally-granted right to operated traffic cameras. We ask that these provisions be removed from the bill.
- 3. Language pre-empting local regulation of low-speed electric scooters.** The League is asking for amendment language clarifying a provision to ensure municipalities have regulatory authority over low-speed electric scooters. There is no one-size-fits-all regulation that accommodates each city and village. Municipalities must be able to protect those on scooters and drivers alike with their own unique ordinances.
- 4. Changes to the local government distribution of new revenue.** The League supports preserving the current revenue allocations to the qualifying local governments that receive distributions from the state motor fuel tax.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this crucial issue. We look forward to working with you on these important matters and ensure a safer, stronger transportation infrastructure for Ohio for years to come.