

AN ACT

To amend sections 5541.05, 5553.11, 5571.20, and 5735.27 of the Revised Code to make changes relative to the provisions that govern the placing of county and township roads on nonmaintained status and to establish that proceedings to vacate a road are not subject to real property appropriation procedures.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That sections 5541.05, 5553.11, 5571.20, and 5735.27 of the Revised Code be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 5541.05. (A) Except as otherwise provided in division (D) of this section, a board of county commissioners by resolution may place a graveled or unimproved county road under its jurisdiction that is not passable year-round or any portion of such a road on nonmaintained status. Prior to adopting a resolution that places a road on nonmaintained status, the board, at special or regular meetings, shall hold at least two public hearings to allow for public comment on the proposed resolution. The board shall publicize the times and places of the hearings by causing a notice to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the road is located at least ten days prior to the date of the first meeting. If the county maintains a web site on the internet, the same notice also shall be posted on the web site at least ten days prior to the date of the first meeting. Upon adoption of such a resolution, the board is not required to cause the road to be dragged at any time, or to cut, destroy, or remove any brush, weeds, briers, bushes, or thistles upon or along the road, or to remove snow from the road, or to maintain or repair the road in any manner. The board, in its discretion, may cause any of these actions to be performed on or to a road that it has placed on nonmaintained status.

(B) Prior to adopting a resolution under division (A) of this section, the board shall request the county engineer to issue an advisory opinion regarding the consequences of placing the road on nonmaintained status, including any impact such action would have on adjoining property owners. A board may adopt a resolution under division (A) of this section only if

after the ~~board~~ county engineer issues the advisory opinion and the county engineer, in the advisory opinion, finds that placing the road on nonmaintained status will not unduly adversely affect the flow of motor vehicle traffic on that road or on any ~~other~~ adjacent road located in the immediate vicinity of that road as determined by the overall use of the road during the preceding twenty-one years.

(C)(1) A board may terminate the nonmaintained status of a county road by adopting a resolution to that effect. If the owner of land adjoining a road that has been placed on nonmaintained status requests the board to terminate the nonmaintained status of the road, the board, in its resolution that terminates that nonmaintained status, may require the owner to pay the costs of upgrading the road to locally adopted county standards.

(2) If the owner of land adjoining a road that has been placed on nonmaintained status upgrades the road to the standards most recently certified by the county engineer for the road, the board shall terminate the nonmaintained status of the road and then shall maintain and repair the road according to such standards. However, division (C)(2) of this section does not apply to a road or portion of a road that, prior to being placed on nonmaintained status, was not certified by the board of county commissioners to the director of transportation in accordance with division (D) of section 4501.04 of the Revised Code as mileage in the county used by and maintained for the public.

(3) The owner of land adjoining a road that was placed on nonmaintained status prior to the effective date of this amendment or the owner of land whose only access to such a road is by easement may petition the board for review of the nonmaintained status of the road if the road provides the exclusive means for obtaining access to the land. Upon receipt of a petition, the board shall review the status of the road and shall terminate the nonmaintained status if the board finds that the road provides such exclusive means for obtaining access to the land. After completing the review, the board shall adopt a resolution either retaining or terminating the nonmaintained status of the road. If the board terminates the nonmaintained status of a road under division (C)(3) of this section, the board shall not require the owner to pay the costs of upgrading, maintaining, or repairing the road.

(D) A graveled or unimproved road may not be placed on nonmaintained status if ~~any person resides in a residence adjacent to the road,~~ the road is the exclusive means for obtaining access to ~~the residence,~~ and the residence is the person's primary place of residence land that adjoins that road and the road is passable year-round.

(E) For purposes of this section, a road is passable year-round if a four-wheeled, two-wheel drive passenger motor vehicle can be driven on the road year-round, apart from seasonal conditions caused by weather-related events.

Sec. 5553.11. If the proceeding is for an improvement other than the vacation of a road and the board of county commissioners, at its final hearing on the proposed improvement, orders the improvement established, it shall proceed in accordance with sections 163.01 to 163.22, ~~inclusive~~, of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5571.20. (A) Except as otherwise provided in division (D) of this section, a board of township trustees by resolution may place a graveled or unimproved township road under its jurisdiction that is not passable year-round or any portion of such a road on nonmaintained status. Prior to adopting a resolution that places a road on nonmaintained status, the board shall hold at least two public hearings to allow for public comment on the proposed resolution. The board, at special or regular meetings, shall publicize the times and places of the hearings by causing a notice to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the road is located at least ten days prior to the date of the first meeting. If the township maintains a web site on the internet, the same notice also shall be posted on the web site at least ten days prior to the date of the first meeting. Upon adoption of such a resolution, the board is not required to cause the road to be dragged at any time, or to cut, destroy, or remove any brush, weeds, briars, bushes, or thistles upon or along the road, or to remove snow from the road, or to maintain or repair the road in any manner. The board, in its discretion, may cause any of these actions to be performed on or to a road that it has placed on nonmaintained status.

(B) Prior to adopting a resolution under division (A) of this section, the board shall request the county engineer to issue an advisory opinion regarding the consequences of placing the road on nonmaintained status, including any impact such action would have on adjoining property owners. A board may adopt a resolution under division (A) of this section only if after the board county engineer issues the advisory opinion and the county engineer, in the advisory opinion, finds that placing the road on nonmaintained status will not unduly adversely affect the flow of motor vehicle traffic on that road or on any other adjacent road located in the immediate vicinity of that road as determined by the overall use of the road during the preceding twenty-one years.

(C)(1) A board may terminate the nonmaintained status of a township road by adopting a resolution to that effect. If the owner of land adjoining a

road that has been placed on nonmaintained status requests the board to terminate the nonmaintained status of the road, the board, in its resolution that terminates that nonmaintained status, may require the owner to pay the costs of upgrading the road to locally adopted township standards.

(2) If the owner of land adjoining a road that has been placed on nonmaintained status upgrades the road to the standards most recently certified by the county engineer for the road, the board shall terminate the nonmaintained status of the road and then shall maintain and repair the road according to such standards. However, division (C)(2) of this section does not apply to a road or portion of a road that, prior to being placed on nonmaintained status, was not certified by the board of township trustees to the director of transportation in accordance with division (E) of section 4501.04 of the Revised Code as mileage in the township used by and maintained for the public.

(3) The owner of land adjoining a road that was placed on nonmaintained status prior to the effective date of this amendment or land owner of land whose only access to such a road is by easement may petition the board for review of the nonmaintained status of the road if the road provides the exclusive means for obtaining access to the land. Upon receipt of a petition, the board shall review the status of the road and shall terminate the nonmaintained status if the board finds that the road provides such exclusive means for obtaining access to the land. After completing the review, the board shall adopt a resolution either retaining or terminating the nonmaintained status of the road. If the board terminates the nonmaintained status of a road under division (C)(3) of this section, the board shall not require the owner to pay the costs of upgrading, maintaining, or repairing the road.

(D) A graveled or unimproved road may not be placed on nonmaintained status if ~~any person resides in a residence adjacent to the road, the road is the exclusive means for obtaining access to the residence, and the residence is the person's primary place of residence~~ land that adjoins that road and the road is passable year-round.

(E) For purposes of this section, a road is passable year-round if a four-wheeled, two-wheel drive passenger motor vehicle can be driven on the road year-round, apart from seasonal conditions caused by weather-related events.

Sec. 5735.27. (A) There is hereby created in the state treasury the gasoline excise tax fund, which shall be distributed in the following manner:

(1) The amount credited pursuant to divisions (B)(2)(a) and (C)(2)(a) of section 5735.23 of the Revised Code shall be distributed among municipal

corporations. The amount paid to each municipal corporation shall be that proportion of the amount to be so distributed that the number of motor vehicles registered within the municipal corporation bears to the total number of motor vehicles registered within all the municipal corporations of this state during the preceding motor vehicle registration year. When a new village is incorporated, the registrar of motor vehicles shall determine from the applications on file in the bureau of motor vehicles the number of motor vehicles located within the territory comprising the village during the entire registration year in which the municipal corporation was incorporated. The registrar shall forthwith certify the number of motor vehicles so determined to the tax commissioner for use in distributing motor vehicle fuel tax funds to the village until the village is qualified to participate in the distribution of the funds pursuant to this division. The number of motor vehicle registrations shall be determined by the official records of the bureau of motor vehicles. The amount received by each municipal corporation shall be used to plan, construct, reconstruct, repave, widen, maintain, repair, clear, and clean public highways, roads, and streets; to maintain and repair bridges and viaducts; to purchase, erect, and maintain street and traffic signs and markers; to pay the costs apportioned to the municipal corporation under section 4907.47 of the Revised Code; to purchase, erect, and maintain traffic lights and signals; to pay the principal, interest, and charges on bonds and other obligations issued pursuant to Chapter 133. of the Revised Code or incurred pursuant to section 5531.09 of the Revised Code for the purpose of acquiring or constructing roads, highways, bridges, or viaducts or acquiring or making other highway improvements for which the municipal corporation may issue bonds; and to supplement revenue already available for these purposes.

(2) The amount credited pursuant to division (B) of section 5735.26 of the Revised Code shall be distributed among the municipal corporations within the state, in the proportion which the number of motor vehicles registered within each municipal corporation bears to the total number of motor vehicles registered within all the municipal corporations of the state during the preceding calendar year, as shown by the official records of the bureau of motor vehicles, and shall be expended by each municipal corporation to plan, construct, reconstruct, repave, widen, maintain, repair, clear, and clean public highways, roads and streets; to maintain and repair bridges and viaducts; to purchase, erect, and maintain street and traffic signs and markers; to purchase, erect, and maintain traffic lights and signals; to pay costs apportioned to the municipal corporation under section 4907.47 of the Revised Code; to pay the principal, interest, and charges on bonds and

other obligations issued pursuant to Chapter 133. of the Revised Code or incurred pursuant to section 5531.09 of the Revised Code for the purpose of acquiring or constructing roads, highways, bridges, or viaducts or acquiring or making other highway improvements for which the municipal corporation may issue bonds; and to supplement revenue already available for these purposes.

(3) The amount credited pursuant to divisions (B)(2)(b) and (C)(2)(c) of section 5735.23 of the Revised Code shall be paid in equal proportions to the county treasurer of each county within the state and shall be used only for the purposes of planning, maintaining, and repairing the county system of public roads and highways within the county; the planning, construction, and repair of walks or paths along county roads in congested areas; the planning, construction, purchase, lease, and maintenance of suitable buildings for the housing and repair of county road machinery, housing of supplies, and housing of personnel associated with the machinery and supplies; the payment of costs apportioned to the county under section 4907.47 of the Revised Code; the payment of principal, interest, and charges on bonds and other obligations issued pursuant to Chapter 133. of the Revised Code or incurred pursuant to section 5531.09 of the Revised Code for the purpose of acquiring or constructing roads, highways, bridges, or viaducts or acquiring or making other highway improvements for which the board of county commissioners may issue bonds under that chapter; and the purchase, installation, and maintenance of traffic signal lights.

(4) The amount credited pursuant to division (C) of section 5735.26 of the Revised Code shall be paid in equal proportions to the county treasurer of each county for the purposes of planning, maintaining, constructing, widening, and reconstructing the county system of public roads and highways; paying principal, interest, and charges on bonds and other obligations issued pursuant to Chapter 133. of the Revised Code or incurred pursuant to section 5531.09 of the Revised Code for the purpose of acquiring or constructing roads, highways, bridges, or viaducts or acquiring or making other highway improvements for which the board of county commissioners may issue bonds under that chapter; and paying costs apportioned to the county under section 4907.47 of the Revised Code.

(5)(a) The amount credited pursuant to division (D) of section 5735.26 and division (C)(2)(b) of section 5735.23 of the Revised Code shall be divided in equal proportions among the townships within the state.

(b) As used in division (A)(5)(b) of this section, the "formula amount" for any township is the amount that would be allocated to that township if fifty per cent of the amount credited to townships pursuant to section

5735.291 of the Revised Code were allocated among townships in the state proportionate to the number of ~~lane~~ centerline miles within the boundaries of the respective townships, as determined annually by the department of transportation, and the other fifty per cent of the amount credited pursuant to section 5735.291 of the Revised Code were allocated among townships in the state proportionate to the number of motor vehicles registered within the respective townships, as determined annually by the records of the bureau of motor vehicles. The number of centerline miles within the boundaries of a township shall not include any centerline miles of township roads that have been placed on nonmaintained status by a board of township trustees pursuant to section 5571.20 of the Revised Code.

Beginning on August 15, 2003, the tax levied by section 5735.29 of the Revised Code shall be partially allocated to provide funding for townships. Each township shall receive the greater of the following two calculations:

(i) The total statewide amount credited to townships under division (A) of section 5735.291 of the Revised Code divided by the number of townships in the state at the time of the calculation;

(ii) Seventy per cent of the formula amount for that township.

(c) The total difference between the amount of money credited to townships under division (A) of section 5735.291 of the Revised Code and the total amount of money required to make all the payments specified in division (A)(5)(b) of this section shall be deducted, in accordance with division (B) of section 5735.291 of the Revised Code, from the revenues resulting from the tax levied pursuant to section 5735.29 of the Revised Code prior to crediting portions of such revenues to counties, municipal corporations, and the highway operating fund.

(d) All amounts credited pursuant to divisions (A)(5)(a) and (b) of this section shall be paid to the county treasurer of each county for the total amount payable to the townships within each of the counties. The county treasurer shall pay to each township within the county its proportional share of the funds, which shall be expended by each township only for the purposes of planning, constructing, maintaining, widening, and reconstructing the public roads and highways within the township, paying principal, interest, and charges on obligations incurred pursuant to section 5531.09 of the Revised Code, and paying costs apportioned to the township under section 4907.47 of the Revised Code.

No part of the funds designated for road and highway purposes shall be used for any purpose except to pay in whole or part the contract price of any such work done by contract, or to pay the cost of labor in planning, constructing, widening, and reconstructing such roads and highways, and

the cost of materials forming a part of the improvement; provided that the funds may be used for the purchase of road machinery and equipment and for the planning, construction, and maintenance of suitable buildings for housing road machinery and equipment, and that all such improvement of roads shall be under supervision and direction of the county engineer as provided in section 5575.07 of the Revised Code. No obligation against the funds shall be incurred unless plans and specifications for the improvement, approved by the county engineer, are on file in the office of the township fiscal officer, and all contracts for material and for work done by contract shall be approved by the county engineer before being signed by the board of township trustees. The board of township trustees of any township may pass a resolution permitting the board of county commissioners to expend the township's share of the funds, or any portion of it, for the improvement of the roads within the township as may be designated in the resolution.

All investment earnings of the fund shall be credited to the fund.

(B) Amounts credited to the highway operating fund pursuant to divisions (B)(2)(c) and (C)(2)(d) of section 5735.23 and division (A) of section 5735.26 of the Revised Code shall be expended in the following manner:

(1) The amount credited pursuant to divisions (B)(2)(c) and (C)(2)(d) of section 5735.23 of the Revised Code shall be apportioned to and expended by the department of transportation for the purposes of planning, maintaining, repairing, and keeping in passable condition for travel the roads and highways of the state required by law to be maintained by the department; paying the costs apportioned to the state under section 4907.47 of the Revised Code; paying that portion of the construction cost of a highway project which a county, township, or municipal corporation normally would be required to pay, but which the director of transportation, pursuant to division (B) of section 5531.08 of the Revised Code, determines instead will be paid from moneys in the highway operating fund; and paying the costs of the department of public safety in administering and enforcing the state law relating to the registration and operation of motor vehicles.

(2) The amount credited pursuant to division (A) of section 5735.26 of the Revised Code shall be used for paying the state's share of the cost of planning, constructing, widening, maintaining, and reconstructing the state highways; paying that portion of the construction cost of a highway project which a county, township, or municipal corporation normally would be required to pay, but which the director of transportation, pursuant to division (B) of section 5531.08 of the Revised Code, determines instead will be paid from moneys in the highway operating fund; and also for supplying the

state's share of the cost of eliminating railway grade crossings upon such highways and costs apportioned to the state under section 4907.47 of the Revised Code. The director of transportation may expend portions of such amount upon extensions of state highways within municipal corporations or upon portions of state highways within municipal corporations, as is provided by law.

SECTION 2. That existing sections 5541.05, 5553.11, 5571.20, and 5735.27 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

Sub. H. B. No. 318

127th G.A.

The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the ____ day of _____, A. D. 20____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____