



STATE REPRESENTATIVES JACK CERA and JOHN ROGERS  
HB 499 – Joint Sponsor Testimony  
HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Chairman Ryan, Vice Chair Lipps, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 499. I am pleased to come before you today alongside my friend and colleague, Representative John Rogers, to present this legislation. Known as the Restore Ohio program, HB 499 will provide much-needed relief for local governments around the state caught between tightening budgets and the urgent need to repair aging roads, bridges, and water lines.

HB 499 is not about giving handouts or raiding the rainy day fund. It is designed with fiscal responsibility as its guiding principle.

Through Restore Ohio, the state would incrementally leverage up to \$1 billion dollars over a five-year period from the state's Budget Stabilization Fund, making those dollars available to communities in the form of low or zero-interest loans. Additionally, under this proposal, 50 percent of the investment earnings from the Rainy Day Fund will be made available to local communities in the form of infrastructure grants. As loans are repaid, money would be returned back to the Rainy Day Fund, ensuring the fund's long-term solvency.

Crumbling roads have been costing our state's motorists, to the tune of \$475 dollars in increased maintenance costs per driver per year according to the American Society of Civil Engineers<sup>i</sup>. It is time for the legislature to stop passing the costs of inaction on to taxpayers and businesses, creating a needless drag on the state's economy.

One way or another, Ohio will have to come up with \$12.2 billion over the next 20 years to pay for the infrastructure that will ensure access to safe drinking water<sup>ii</sup>. We will have to find some way to repair the nearly 2,000 bridges that have been designated "structurally deficient". Taking advantage of existing capital reserves, Restore Ohio allows us to attack these issues before costs balloon out of control. At the same time, it avoids undoing the years of careful budgeting that allowed us to build up the rainy day fund in the first place.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of HB 499. I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/ohio/>

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