



COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO

**Clinton County Engineer, Jeffrey B. Linkous, P.E., P.S., CEAO 2nd Vice President
Testimony – Senate Bill 6**

**Ohio Senate Finance Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
March 14, 2017**

Chairman LaRose, Ranking Member Tavares, Vice Chairwoman Kunze and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on Senate Bill 6 in favor to formally establish the ODOT Bridge Partnership Program.

In October of 2013 the Ohio Department of Transportation launched the Ohio Bridge Partnership Program for purposes of repairing structurally deficient county and municipal bridges. The joint relationship between ODOT, counties and local jurisdictions was to fund the rehabilitation or reconstruction of selected bridges that are located on county roads or within municipal corporations.

The Ohio Bridge Partnership Program is 100% federally funded. Over the course of it's first 3 years, the program invested \$120 million dollars to replace approximately 200 bridges.

In the beginning, approximately 1,100 county bridges qualified for possible selection for this program. Bridges selections for this program are made based on the fact that they:

- Met the federal bridge definition of being 20+ feet long
- Are rated as structurally deficient and/or are posted.
- Are currently open to and carrying traffic.

This program was designed to be managed by the Office of Local Programs, who worked closely with each district to deliver these projects. In addition, these projects were managed as follows:

- Projects were Design-build
- Programed by the Office of Local Programs
- Projects were sold and managed by ODOT
- A statewide selection took place to hire consultants to assist with delivery of these projects.
- Local entities were responsible for acquiring rights-of-way, with the costs of the acquisitions reimbursed by the Department.

In 2015 ODOT committed to Phase 2 of the Program by committing \$10 million for State Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017, which replaced 10 more bridges. Again in 2016 they committed \$10 million for Phase 3 that will replace another 10 bridges in 2018 and 2019.

County Engineers Association of Ohio is in support of permanently continuing the Ohio Bridge Partnership Program. It does not completely solve the bridge funding issue. Nevertheless, as with every new program, if there are opportunities to improve the program we would like to make them. CEAO is committed to working with Sen. Hoagland, other legislators, ODOT and any other interested party as this bill moves through the legislative process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today in favor of the Ohio Bridge Partnership Program. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.