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Committees:

- Finance – *Ranking Minority Member*
- Agriculture
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Finance – General Government & Agency Review Subcommittee
- Government Oversight and Reform
- Judiciary

Before the Senate Transportation, Commerce, and Workforce Committee
Senate Bill 61 – Increase Funding for Public Transportation
Sponsor Testimony by Senator Michael J. Skindell
December 13, 2017

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Schiavoni and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on SB 61. This bill will increase GRF dollars for the remainder of this current fiscal year by \$5million. It will increase the public transportation funding to \$25 million in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019.

Public transportation in this state is severely underfunded. Funding has decreased from \$44 million in 2000 to \$7.3 million in both Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017 in the last biennium budget. In the current budget, funding was cut even further to \$6.5 million for Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019. Ohio ranks eighth lowest in the nation with its \$.63 per-capita contribution, lower than even smaller states like Minnesota (\$340 million per year) and Michigan (\$200 million per year).¹ Preferences of younger Ohioans, as well as the increased needs of our elder citizens make such low funding unsustainable.

An Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Study conducted in 2015, concluded that with a growing economy and population, public transportation services in the state are being unmet. Those needs include providing service in areas that do not currently have access to any public transportation as well as areas that have service but need more. Recognizing that public sources of funding are stretched thin across all levels of government the aforementioned study is a resource for maximizing the efficiency of funds. A strong public transportation system is essential to a growing economy attracting and retaining young talent while supporting our elder community, providing access to medical and human service programs.

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chair Kunze, Ranking Member Schiavoni and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee, I would be happy to answer any questions relating to this legislation.

¹ Policy Matters Ohio, October 26, 2017, Post 2018 – 2019 Budget Bite: Public Transit