



CITY OF KETTERING

DONALD E. PATTERSON, MAYOR • BILL LAUTAR, VICE MAYOR
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Written Testimony regarding House Bill 62

William Lautar, Vice Mayor Kettering, Ohio

The Ohio House of Representatives

Finance Committee

Representative Oelslager, Chair

Tuesday, February 25, 2019

Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman Scherer and committee members, my name is William Lautar. I am the Vice Mayor for the City of Kettering, located in southwest Ohio with a population of 56,000. I write to you on behalf of Mayor Donald E. Patterson and my fellow members of Kettering City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding House Bill 62.

Our gratitude to Governor DeWine, Chairman Oelslager and the House Finance Committee for demonstrating leadership and commitment to the vibrancy of our cities and to improving quality of life for all Ohio residents.

We whole-heartedly agree that well maintained infrastructure is a critical foundation for public safety and the economic viability of Ohio communities. We frequently seek public input on city priorities, and we know from recent Resident Satisfaction Surveys that 40% of our residents report that the condition of roadways is a significant concern. 82% of our residents believe investment in roadway improvements should be prioritized.

Our roadways and infrastructure maintain the connection between where our residents live and their economic livelihood. Well maintained infrastructure is central to our efforts to attract and retain high quality jobs. Infrastructure is also critical to the city's responsibility to provide municipal services, particularly police and fire.

On average, the City of Kettering spends approximately \$7,000,000 on roadway infrastructure capital improvements each year to maintain our 246 miles of roadway. We are reliant on State and Federal grants to keep our 44 miles of primary thoroughfares in good condition, but we are falling behind in the

condition of our 202 miles of residential streets. This is where the anticipated additional revenue from the proposed 18-cent gas tax increase would help the most. Construction cost inflation over the last 15 years has eroded our buying power, and without additional revenue we are finding it difficult to keep pace with the repairs that many of our roadways need. We currently resurface the majority of our roadways on a 30 to 35 year cycle. To keep pace with the demands on our infrastructure and the harsh freeze-thaw cycles that our roadways endure, we should be resurfacing the majority of our roadways on a 25 to 30 year cycle. An additional \$1.5 million in annual gas tax revenue for the City of Kettering that an 18-cent increase could generate, would go a long way toward improving the condition of our roadways. In addition, indexing the State gas tax to inflation would greatly help to ensure that adequate revenue for roadway maintenance and improvements is generated for years to come.

We know that our neighboring jurisdictions, and most communities across the state, are facing similar challenges as our infrastructure reaches, and in some cases outlives, its intended lifespan. We contend that the best way to demonstrate commitment to keeping all Ohio communities safe and vibrant is to ensure that local jurisdictions have the financial resources that allow us to meet our infrastructure investment needs. We are strongly in favor of any efforts to increase funds available for infrastructure reinvestment and the restoration of the Local Government Fund. This was our single largest dedicated source for infrastructure repair and replacement. Without it, we are faced with the decision to do less than we know is needed.

We thank you for bringing forward this meaningful proposal and ask that you continue to support efforts which strengthen our local communities for a safer, stronger, more prosperous Ohio.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,



William Lautar
Vice Mayor