Representative Scott Wiggam

Chairman Green, Vice Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and members of the House Transportation Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 501.

Last year, there were 120 crashes in Ohio involving animal drawn vehicles, with 60 percent occurring during day light hours. Currently, during the day light hours all that buggies are required to have is either a slow moving vehicle emblem or reflective tape. Then from sunset to sunrise all that is added is a white lamp on the front of the buggy and 2 red lights on the rear. Under this scenario, you can be driving your car 50 miles per hour on a rainy, foggy day, take a turn and with only seconds to react, only see a black rectangle. With the speed and protection difference between the two vehicles, unfortunately 20 percent of these accidents will result in serious injury or death. This is very real situation, I have talked with many constituents that have seen the devastating affects these accidents have and several will be coming in to testify about their experiences. Whether it takes place during the day or night, one similarity that seems to bind many of these accidents together is that they never saw the buggy until it was too late. Under our bill, these buggies will increase their visibility by updating the reflective tape to micro prism tape, which reflects eighty percent of light compared to traditional reflective tape that only reflects twenty percent of light. We also seek to improve visibility by requiring a yellow flashing light on either the top or upper most portion of the buggy. Now when that vehicle turns that corner they will see the buggy and be able to react in time, effectively saving lives.

These changes come as recommendations from studies connected by the Highway patrol and the Ohio State University.

Everything our society wants to protect has a flashing light, from our school buses to our fire trucks and law enforcement. I respectfully ask for your support of this legislation. Thank you all for your time and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.