



GREATER OHIO POLICY CENTER

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House Finance Committee
Interested Party Testimony, Sub. House Bill 74 (Oelslager)
Tuesday, March 2, 2021

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairman Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley and Members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to once gain share interested party testimony on House Bill 74, the state transportation budget for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023.

As I noted when I testified to the committee on February 17, two years ago, this legislature enacted a historic state transportation budget that provided for the single-largest investment in public transportation in a generation. This investment provided the resources necessary for Ohio's public transit agencies both large and small, rural and urban, to **expand services, enhance education opportunities, make needed capital investments and invest in new technology.**

The executive budget was disheartening to Greater Ohio, Ohio's public transit agencies, and advocates for public transit around the state, as it proposed to cut state-support for public transportation by 90 percent versus what has been appropriated over the past biennium. This cut would have severed a lifeline for millions of Ohioans who rely on public transportation to access jobs, education, healthcare and basic needs every single day.

This is why **Greater Ohio appreciates the work of the House Finance Committee, reflected in the substitute version of House Bill 74, and the proposal to allocate \$46.3 million in general revenue funds, along with \$66 million in FHWA Flex Funding** for public transportation over the next two years. This funding will ensure that Ohio's public transportation agencies are able to continue to invest in innovation and new technology while ensuring that riders who rely on public transportation will be able to do so.

While this funding is welcome, Greater Ohio does continue to believe that it is important that Ohio look to the future needs of public transportation along with the immediate needs as well. To that end, we would once again ask that the committee **consider the proposed amendment which would establish a joint legislative task force which can consider and make recommendations to the General Assembly for a dedicated source of funding for public transportation**, allowing Ohio to join with the 25 other states and the District of Columbus that have a permanent, predictable source of funding that allows for long-term planning and budgeting and gives riders the confidence to know that public transportation can continue to be their for them for the years to come.

Thank you for your support and consideration of our proposal.

Jason Warner
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