



PATRICK T. GINNETTI, P.E., P.S.
MAHONING COUNTY ENGINEER

March 22, 2021

Chairman Kunze, VC Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Antonio
Transportation Committee Members

**RE: Sub HB 74, Transportation Budget
FORCE ACCOUNT limits increase - SUPPORT**

Honorable Members,

I am writing to express my support for Sub. House Bill 74, the Transportation Budget - particularly the addition of the language increasing county and other local government force account limits. Although each county has differences (i.e. union, non-union, rural, urban, etc.), each county also has similarities in the type of work that can be accomplished with its own forces.

Mahoning County has a budget of \$11 million, which has been relatively stagnant for two decades. The current force account limits are constraining Mahoning County to hire private contractors to perform a number of emergency repairs because the amount exceeds the allowable limits. In the past two years, Mahoning County has had two emergency road subsidence projects that had to be bid due to the fact that repairs needed were above the \$30,000 threshold. There are a number of other projects that involve guardrail, paving, storm sewer and bridge repair, just to mention a few, that could be performed in-house if the limits were higher. With inflation rising and County Engineer budgets not indexed to inflation, \$30,000 on a roadway project does not go very far in today's ever-changing world. For example, the cost to pave one mile of a two-lane road that is 20 feet wide is approximately \$110,000 per mile. That equates to an increase of more than 110% over the past 15 years.

Increasing the local force account limits not only keeps our local government union workers employed, it would result in a cost savings for the county as well. There is an increased cost for subcontracting work which could be done in-house. While material costs are the same for both private and public sectors, the county workforce does not have a markup for profit, thus enabling us to perform some of the duties at a lower cost. The increase in force account limits would permit the county to focus on the smaller emergency projects and routine repair projects that need completed while allowing local contractors to perform the intermediate and larger scale projects.

The cost savings of having the county workers perform the smaller projects could result in more of the aforementioned intermediate and large scale projects being performed. The money saved from performing the work with our own forces could free up other areas within the budget and make for a better, more efficient use of tax dollars.

I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read my comments on this matter, and I look to forward to further future discussions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick T. Ginnetti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patrick T. Ginnetti, P.E., P.S
Mahoning County Engineer