

OFFICE OF THE
MONROE COUNTY ENGINEER
AMY M. ZWICK, PE, PS, COUNTY ENGINEER
P.O. BOX 555, WOODSFIELD, OHIO 43793
PHONE (740) 472-2537 FAX (740) 472-2530

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

March 19, 2021

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

County: Monroe
Budget: \$4,900,000.00

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.

Monroe County is one of the most rural counties in Southeast Ohio, with a population around 14,000. We have 372 miles of county roads and nearly 200 bridges to maintain. With less than \$5 million to work with each year, rural counties such as ours, work hard to stretch every dollar. County forces are exceptionally efficient and take great pride in their work, producing quality repairs that will benefit their friends and family for years to come.

With current force account limits, County crews are only able to complete the very small projects such as culvert replacements and minor road patching, leaving the mid-to-larger projects such as bridge replacements and roadway paving for contractors to bid on. Many of the bridge replacements are for structures barely 20-feet long, and not feasibly profitable for a contractor to bid on. If force account limits were raised, our County Forces would be able to complete these mid-sized projects in-house, saving money and ensuring a quality repair.

Raising force account limits, allowing more small projects to be performed by County crews, means that counties such as Monroe, with a local union workforce, will be able to keep our workers employed. Without raising force account limits, our crews' scope of projects will continue to be diminished, due to ever-increasing material and equipment costs.

Even by raising the force account limits as proposed, there will be several larger projects for contractors to perform each year. These larger projects are the ones that contractors are able to perform well, at reasonable costs, while still making a profit.

I urge to support Monroe County, all County Engineers, and local governments, by including the proposed language increasing force account limits in Sub. House Bill 74.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Zwick, P.S., P.E.
Monroe County Engineer