



# OHIO TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

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*Protecting & Preserving Ohio's Townships Since 1928*

## 2024-2025

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### HJR 8 Public Works

#### Proponent Testimony

November 20, 2024

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Township Association (OTA), we are writing in support of House Joint Resolution 8 (HJR 8), which reauthorizes the State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP).

Ohio's infrastructure supports essential functions of our state, from daily commutes to stormwater collection. Roads, bridges, water supply and wastewater treatment systems, stormwater collection, and solid waste management are all critical components that keep Ohio operating smoothly. Yet, the funding behind these essential projects often goes unnoticed.

Since 1987, the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) has been at the forefront of financing local government infrastructure projects through SCIP. Funded by voter approved bonds, this program has been renewed three times by Ohioans and is set to expire in July 2025. **The OTA strongly supports the program's fourth renewal be placed on the May ballot to prevent any delays in continuing this essential work.**

Ohio's townships have benefited from SCIP. Many projects funded are collaborative efforts that involve partnerships between townships and their county engineer. Numerous township projects address road safety issues, such as high vehicular crashes or intersection and sight distance impairments. Townships in Ohio are responsible for over 41,000 miles of road - more than counties, municipalities, or ODOT- and during the current authorization period, which includes nine of ten funding rounds, Ohio's 1,308 townships have received \$194.1 million. In total, the OPWC has granted \$2.3 billion across the state to local governments and water and sewer districts.

**The OTA strongly supports HJR 8 and the request to increase OPWC funding by \$50 million annually.** A healthy and comprehensive infrastructure is essential to continued economic development in Ohio. If Ohio and our local communities are to remain competitive, we must continue rebuilding the basic infrastructure of the state. We urge the committee's support for the proposed increase in funding, and for the renewal issue to be placed on the May ballot.

While the passage of HJR 8 will provide additional funding to the OPWC program, including the Small Government program, the OTA encourages the General Assembly to increase OPWC resources to the Small Government program by 10% during the next transportation budget. These funds awarded as grants or loans would greatly impact the 35% of residents that live in townships across the state and will provide a fairer distribution of the OPWC funds.

Thank you for your consideration of the OTA's position. **Again, the OTA strongly supports HJR 8 and the request to increase OPWC funding by \$50 million annually.** We appreciate Representative Oelslager, and Representative Troy for sponsoring this legislation. Should you have any questions or concerns about our position, please do not hesitate to contact OTA Director of Governmental Affairs, Kyle A. Brooks, at 614-863-0045.