

Office of the Lucas County Engineer

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February 28, 2023

Representative Riordan McClain, Chair
Representative Ron Ferguson, Vice Chair
Representative Michele Grim, Ranking Member
Ohio House Transportation Committee

**RE: Testimony of Lucas County Engineer Mike Pniewski P.E., P.S.
H.B. 54 – Designate Keith Earley Memorial Interchange**

Dear Chair McClain, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Grim and the Members of the House Transportation Committee,

I testifying today to express my support for House Bill 54, to honor my late predecessor as Lucas County Engineer, Keith Earley, P.E., P.S. by naming his greatest achievement, the I-475 and Dorr Street Interchange as the Keith Earley Memorial Interchange.

Keith served as the Lucas County Engineer from 2000 until his retirement in 2019. Keith also served as the Mercer County Engineer for over 16 years and was of the few County Engineers to serve in multiple counties. His dedication to the public was unmatched and he was always looking for opportunities to improve the communities in which he lived. I and many others have learned from his example and I can only hope to serve in the unselfish and devoted manner that he did.

One of the largest challenges in our area was to construct an interchange on Dorr Street on Interstate I-475. Multiple Toledo area transportation plans over decades identified this interchange as one of the largest needs of the region. It provided a secondary access to the University of Toledo as well as to the headquarters of Welltower and provided access to a large area of western Lucas County. Keith was a leader in developing the coalition of private and public partners to obtain the support and funding required to make this interchange a reality for our area.

For over a decade, he was constantly advocating for this important piece of infrastructure and developed the funding applications from TRAC and other jurisdictions. Due to his efforts, the project was one of the highest ranked projects in the history of TRAC funding. He also spearheaded the funding plan with several local and private partners make the project a reality.

Keith was also an advocate of highway safety and worked to obtain funding for what was then a new idea for intersection improvements, the modern roundabout. Early on, Keith saw the improvements in traffic and safety the roundabout would provide for our community and aggressively obtained the funding needed to improve our roadways. As a result, Lucas County has the largest amount of roundabout intersections per capita in Ohio with over 30. Five of these roundabouts are located on the Dorr Street Interchange.

The interchange has been open since 2021 and has made a significant difference in the area since its opening, saving the public countless hours of delay and improving the safety of our roadways. Sadly, Keith was not able to see the fruit of his efforts as he passed away from cancer in December 2021.

Due to his long career of public service and his commitment to Lucas County and highway safety, I support the naming of the Dorr Street and Interstate 475 interchange as the Keith Earley Memorial Interchange.

Thank you for your consideration today, and I look forward to your questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Pniewski, P.E., P.S.
Lucas County Engineer