

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Ed Good. I am a township trustee in Mead Township, Belmont County. I also serve as a Board Member on the Ohio Township Association (OTA) Board of Directors. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on SJR 4.

I have been a township trustee for over 27 years. During this time, Mead Township has been awarded seven projects, totaling over \$1 million, through the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC). These projects include road repair, road slip repair, and embankment failure mitigation. All of these critical infrastructure improvements may not have been possible without the support and funding provided by OPWC.

Mead Township is included in District 18 of OPWC, which includes Athens, Belmont, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, and Washington counties. District 18 has greatly benefited from OPWC's assistance over the last 30 years. This district has received over \$150 million in SCIP/LTIP dollars, aiding local governments in maintaining and improving their infrastructure. Last year alone, OPWC invested more than \$8.5 million in grants for 25 projects across District 18. This investment translated into improvements for over 125 roads in Southeast Ohio, demonstrating the substantial positive impact of these funds.

I strongly support placing the reauthorization measure on the May ballot. The opportunity for voters to decide on this critical funding in May ensures no delays in awards. **Additionally, I support the proposed increase in funding by \$50 million per year.** This increase is crucial for addressing the growing infrastructure needs across Ohio, particularly in underfunded and rural areas like Mead Township. **I strongly support** the Small Government fund, which guarantees grants and loans to villages and townships with populations of under 5,000. This dedicated funding stream is essential for ensuring that even the smallest communities can undertake necessary infrastructure projects that would otherwise be unattainable due to limited local resources.

Through the current authorization period of SCIP, townships have received just 8.4% of the total funding. Roads equate to 56.8% of the total funding by infrastructure type of eligible projects. Townships are responsible for 41,000 miles of road, which is more than any other political subdivision and ODOT. It may be hard to believe but many townships, especially in Appalachia, still have gravel roads, which usually do not score enough points to be a funded OPWC project. I hope that during next year's budget process discussions can be held so townships may get a fairer scoring process, and additional guaranteed revenue share.

Townships, on average, receive the least amount of local government funding. With a population of just 2,000, Mead Township faces significant financial constraints. The Public Works program has and will continue to significantly improve the quality of life for our residents by ensuring safe and reliable infrastructure.

Senator Dolan, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on SJR 4. I'd be happy to answer any questions you or the committee may have.