

Proponent Testimony on HB 96
Before the House Finance Committee
By Tony Fiore, Executive Director, Ohio Aviation Association
Thursday, March 13, 2025



Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Rose Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on **HB 96**.

My name is Tony Fiore, and I serve as the Executive Director for the Ohio Aviation Association. OAA advances aviation and airports across Ohio. It represents the 104 public-owned, public-use airports in the State of Ohio and numerous businesses that use and rely on airports.

Airports Economic Impact in Ohio

Ohio's diverse and robust system of airports:

- **Has an economic impact of between \$15-30 billion**
- **Employs more than 119,000 employees**
- **Has a development (construction) estimate of \$1.18 billion (2025-2029)**

It connects citizens, businesses, and communities to destinations around the world while providing significant economic impacts and growth opportunities to the Ohio economy.

Airport Infrastructure Need

Ohio airports need your help to access funding under the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The annual request from general aviation airports is between \$20-\$25 million. The FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) provides funding for public-owned, public use airport pavement maintenance, lighting, marking and terminal development. But, depending on the size of the airport, the local match required is 5-25% of the project. Therefore, state funds can enable Ohio's airports to remain competitive in maintaining and enhancing these critical aviation infrastructure assets. As you can see in the chart other states are making significant investments in their airports. We hope the Ohio General Assembly will do the same.

For example, \$20 million invested in airport infrastructure projects can yeild approximately \$400 million in FAA funding into Ohio.

**How Does Ohio Funding Compare to Other
State Budgets Supporting Airports?**

Ohio: \$10 million	104 Public Use Airports
Kentucky: \$23 million	59 Public Use Airports
Florida: \$328 million	125 Public Use Airports
Georgia: \$80 million	105 Public Use Airports
North Carolina: \$232 million	72 Public Use Airports
South Carolina: \$57 million	58 Public Use Airports
Tennessee: \$57.3 million	77 Public Use Airports
Virginia: \$56.9 million	65 Public Use Airports

Existing Funding in Transportation Budget (HB 54) and General Operating Budget (HB 96)

Ohio airports receive funding in both the transportation and general operating budgets. I've summarized the line items below.

<u>ALI</u>	<u>ALI Description</u>	<u>Fund</u>	<u>FY26</u>	<u>FY27</u>	<u>Bill</u>
777471	Airport Improvements	GRF	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	HB 96
772456	Unmanned Aerial Systems Center	GRF	\$500,000	\$500,000	HB 96
777472	Aviation Improvements – Federal	7002	\$405,000	\$405,000	HB 54
777475	Aviation Administration	7002	\$6,973,124	\$7,106,246	HB 54
777615	County Airport Maintenance	5W90	\$620,000	\$620,000	HB 54
777477	Aviation Infrastructure Bank – State	2130	\$2,400,000	\$2,400,000	HB 54

Under federal law, state or local taxes on aviation fuel (except taxes in effect on December 30, 1987) are considered to be airport revenue and subject to the revenue-use requirement. Airport revenues can only be expended for the capital or operating costs of the airport; the local airport system; or other local facilities owned or operated by the airport owner or operator and directly and substantially related to the air transportation of passengers or property. State taxes on aviation fuel can also be used to support state aviation programs.

OAA is proposing to keep the general revenue appropriations at the levels in the as introduced budget above. It is equally important to keep the House transportation budget language in Sections 4519.401, 4955.50 and 5736.02 and 5736.13. It directs **all** aviation fuel tax revenue collected at the local and state level go toward airport improvement projects as federal law proscribes. Other states have set up similar trust funds and Ohio should do the same. Under this scenario the Ohio Department of Taxation is directed to transfer over to ODOT - Office of Aviation the full amount of aviation fuel tax receipts into the airport improvement program. Project needs around the state include:

- Funds to replace underground fuel storage tanks on airports (proposed \$4 million in Ohio Department of Commerce – Bureau of Underground Storage Tanks)
- Funds for enhancing security, baggage claim and customer experience at commercial service airports (proposed \$10 million in Ohio Department of Commerce)
- Fund building hangers at general aviation airports (proposed \$10 million in Ohio Department of Commerce)

The Ohio Aviation Association urges your support for **HB 96**. If Ohio does not provide additional funds for Ohio's 104 public-owned, public use airports to access up to 95% of federal funds for infrastructure projects those funds will go to airports in other states.

I would be happy to answer any questions.