

Proponent Testimony on HB 96
Before the Senate Finance Committee
By Tony Fiore, Executive Director, Ohio Aviation Association
Wednesday, May 28, 2025



Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate 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 yield approximately \$400 million in FAA funding into Ohio.



Existing Funding in General Operating Budget (HB 96 – As Passed by the House version)

| ALI | ALI Description | Fund | FY26 (Governor) | FY26 (House) (as of 4/9/25) | FY 26 (Senate) | FY27 (Governor) | FY27 (House) (as of 4/9/25) | FY 26 (Senate) |
|--------|----------------------------------|------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 777471 | Airport Improvements | GRF | \$10,000,000 | \$17,000,000 | | \$10,000,000 | \$15,000,000 | |
| 777628 | Ohio Airport Improvement Program | 5CN1 | No provision | \$4,650,000 | | No provision | \$4,650,000 | |
| 772456 | Unmanned Aerial Systems Center | GRF | \$500,000 | \$4,500,000 | | \$500,000 | \$500,000 | |

Under federal law, state or local taxes on aviation fuel (except taxes in effect on December 30, 1987) are 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 Passed by the House version. It is equally important to keep the House 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. The language could be more specific to local and state sales tax on aviation fuel to be clear. 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: 1) funds to replace underground fuel storage tanks on airports, 2) funds for enhancing security, baggage claim & customer experience at commercial service airports, and 3) funds for building hangars at general aviation airports.

There are several other policy issues that OAA would support that enhance Ohio's airports and aviation industry that I'm happy to provide to the committee. These include but are not limited to: 1) maintaining the existing tax expenditures in place, 2) adding one that would open the door to aircraft being purchased in state instead of out of state, 3) protecting our airspace for pilots and passengers; 4) language that would encourage public private partnerships (P3) with airports; and 5) permissive language allowing county engineers to share services with airports

The front door to our great state may be one of our 96 general aviation airports or 6 commercial service airport terminals. That's why we need to maintain our robust network of airports as other states are doing. A mile of road takes you to the next mile, but a mile of runway takes you anywhere in the world.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 96. I would be happy to answer any questions.



2025-2026

Public Policy Priorities



What We Do

The Ohio Aviation Association (OAA) advances aviation and airports across Ohio. As the voice for Ohio airports, the OAA works to develop policies and affect legislation through education and advocacy in the executive and legislative branches on behalf of our members.



What We Practice

OAA helps to position Ohio's 104 public-owned, public use airports for growth opportunities. To do this, we prioritize the following:

Support Infrastructure Investment: Ensure a sustainable funding stream to provide needed infrastructure improvements at Ohio's network of airports.

Protect Aviation Assets: Ensure legislation and policy is in place to protect Ohio's airports and airspace to provide for future needs of Ohioans.

Support Air Service Initiatives: Support state efforts to ensure an attractive level of air service for current and future businesses and universities, as well as residents of Ohio.

Support Workforce Initiatives: Support state + local efforts to increase the workforce pipeline in all sectors of aviation.



Why Ohio Lawmakers Should Prioritize Aviation + Airports

The aviation sector is designated as critical infrastructure. Ohio's diverse and robust system of airports collectively have an economic impact of more than \$15 billion + employs more than 119,000 employees. It connects citizens, businesses, and communities to destinations around the world while providing significant economic impacts and growth opportunities to the Ohio economy.

In addition to the economic impacts, airports further strengthen Ohio through:



Executive Director + Kegler Brown Attorney



For more information, please contact OAA Executive Director Tony Fiore at tony@ohioaviation.org or 614-462-5428

**Total Development Estimate for
Airports in Ohio 2025-2029**
\$1,189,039,002

RGP Northwest Airports
2025-26 Development Est.: \$101,888,746

Team NEO Airports
2025-26 Development Est.: \$367,900,363

Lake to River Airports
2025-26 Development Est.: \$35,088,250

DDC Airports
2025-26 Development Est.: \$162,794,111

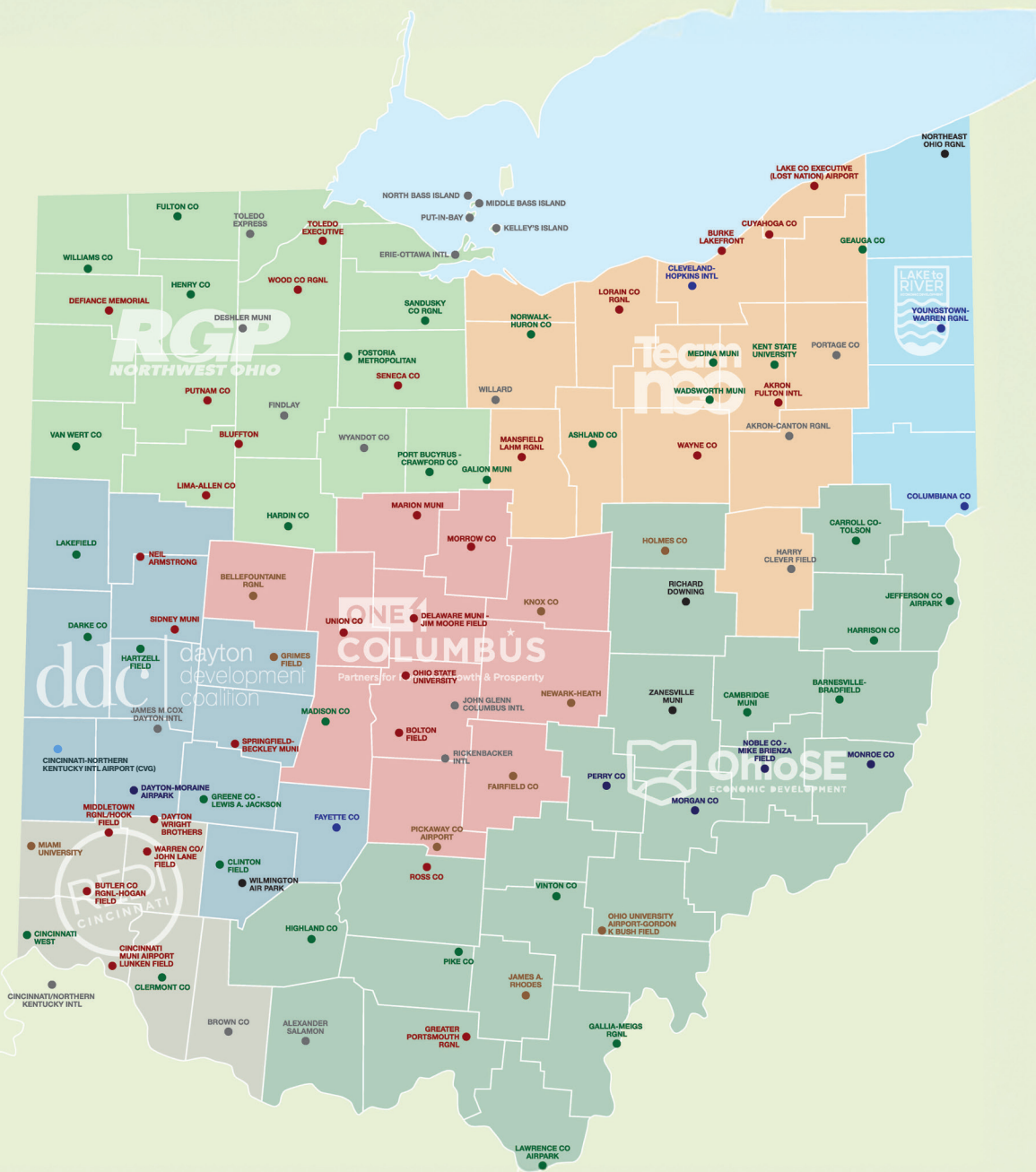
One Columbus Airports
2025-26 Development Est.: \$413,683,830

Ohio Southeast Airports
2025-26 Development Est.: \$59,298,269

REDI Cincinnati Airports
2025-26 Development Est.: \$48,385,433

All Airports
Annual Economic Impact: \$15-30B
Jobs Created: 119,088

All General Aviation Airports
Annual Economic Impact: \$1.85-3B
Jobs Created: 17,497



ODOT: Office of Aviation
\$10M Airport Improvement Program +
\$5M Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

**Ohio Department of Commerce: Bureau
of Underground Storage Tanks**
\$4M for underground storage tanks at airports

Ohio Department of Development
\$10M Airport Customer Service
Enhancements Fund + \$10M Hangar
Construction Development Fund

FY 25-26 Budget Requests for All Airports

The annual requests from general aviation airports is between \$20 and \$25 million. Commercial airports do not have any dedicated state funding. The Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program provides grants to public-owned, public use airports. 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.

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

Ohio: \$10 million
Kentucky: \$23 million
Florida: \$328 million
Georgia: \$80 million
North Carolina: \$232 million
South Carolina: \$57 million
Tennessee: \$57.3 million
Virginia: \$56.9 million

104 Public Use Airports
59 Public Use Airports
125 Public Use Airports
105 Public Use Airports
72 Public Use Airports
58 Public Use Airports
77 Public Use Airports
65 Public Use Airports