

June 4, 2025

TESTIMONY - HOUSE BILL 96  
OHIO SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony in support of preserving the Ohio Rail Development Commission's proposed allocations in House Bill 96.

My name is David Arganbright, Senior Vice President Government Affairs for OmniTRAX, a shortline railroad holding company operating four properties in Ohio. 3 of our properties operate in economically challenged parts of Cuyahoga County – the Cleveland Port Railway (CPR), the Cleveland & Cuyahoga Railway (CCRL) and the Newburgh & South Shore Railway (NSR).

The NSR had been owned by US Steel and was abandoned when their American Steel & Wire mill shut down in 1986. A predecessor of OmniTRAX rescued the line and fought to preserve service for future customers in the Cuyahoga Valley. Today, NSR is proud to serve major manufacturers including Charter Steel and National Lime & Stone.

None of this would have been possible without our multi-year collaborations with the ORDC on projects that included public funding. Charter Steel's recent expansion was supported by ORDC funds to increase our capacity for the new business.

In Seneca and Sandusky County, our Northern Ohio & Western Railway (NOW), which serves Senator Reineke's hometown of Tiffin, was recently awarded a Federal CRISI grant (which also included ORDC funding support and was submitted by them) to rebuild the entire line. The largest customer that we serve there is Carmeuse.

It has recently come to our attention that a final draft of this bill has slashed ORDC's small but necessary funding allocation of \$6MM by 50% down to \$3MM. We hope that this is merely a drafting oversight which can be easily rectified once it has been brought to your collective attention that it has occurred.

ORDC funding may be small, but it has a powerful multiplier effect in getting other Federal and private funding to work collaboratively for solving transportation bottlenecks that can limit the growth of future business opportunities in Ohio.

We ask for your strong reconsideration in returning ORDC funding to the \$6MM level.

Sincerely,



Dave Arganbright  
SVP, Government Affairs