OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Rick Carfagna, Senior Vice President
Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Proponent Testimony – Senate Bill 475
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Good afternoon, Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Ohio Senate General Government Committee. I'm Rick Carfagna, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 475 (SB 475).

For 133 years, the Ohio Chamber has served as the state's leading business advocate and represents over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

Ohio's economy depends on affordable and reliable transportation, and rising fuel costs continue to impact Ohio families and businesses alike. They create challenges for families commuting to work, businesses delivering products, farmers moving crops and manufacturers shipping goods across the state. As transportation costs rise, those increases ripple throughout the economy and ultimately affect the cost of doing business in Ohio – a category which CNBC rated Ohio as #1 in the country when awarding us its overall *Top State for Business* distinction.

SB 475 provides motor fuel relief by establishing a temporary reduction in Ohio's motor fuel tax rate on gasoline and diesel fuel to one-hundredth of one cent per gallon, while still preserving the transportation funding that our state's economy relies on.

Historically, the Chamber has expressed reservations about proposals that reduce or suspend the motor fuel tax without replacing the revenue that funds the roads, bridges, and transportation infrastructure in our state. Senate Bill 475 addresses that concern by appropriating funds to hold transportation programs harmless during the temporary reduction period, while ensuring that critical road and bridge projects can continue uninterrupted.

The Ohio Chamber's recently released *Blueprint for Ohio's Economic Future* identifies infrastructure as one of the foundational pillars of Ohio's competitiveness. Our transportation network is one of the most connected in the country, linking people, goods, and regional economies. CNBC recognized that strength when it also ranked Ohio #1 in the nation in its infrastructure category. Ohioans understand that strong infrastructure is essential to the state's long-term prosperity, as voters made clear when they approved Issue 2 to renew the State Capital Improvement Program with the Chamber's support. Our

highways, bridges, and freight corridors support the advanced manufacturing, logistics operations, and national supply chains that drive economic growth. Keeping that competitive advantage requires a continued commitment to transportation funding.

For these reasons, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce supports Senate Bill 475, which strikes the right balance: meaningful relief at the pump for Ohio families and employers, and a fully funded transportation system that keeps our economy moving. Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions.