Ohio Senate General Government Committee
County Engineers Association of Ohio
SB 475: Interested Party Testimony
September 29,2026

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Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testify on behalf of the County Engineers Association of Ohio for SB 475. Ohio's county engineers understand the discussion taking place over the motor fuel tax and the cost of gasoline and diesel. We also understand the desire to provide relief to Ohioans.

CEAO comes before you today as an interested party with a simple request: **Whatever changes are made, they should not come at the expense of the roads and bridges Ohioans depend on every day.**

There are three things we believe must be protected.

1. **Keep the commitments Ohio has already made.**

   ODOT has projects under contract. It has projects scheduled for construction. It has debt obligations and bonding commitments based on expected transportation revenues. Those commitments should be honored.

   A change in tax policy should not mean stopping a project that has already been promised, delaying work that has already been scheduled, or weakening Ohio's ability to finance future transportation projects.

2. **Protect local transportation dollars.**

   Motor fuel tax revenue does not simply stay in Columbus. It goes back to counties, cities, villages, and townships across Ohio. Those dollars repair roads, replace bridges and culverts, buy salt, plow snow, and help communities maintain the infrastructure their residents and businesses use every day.

   If the General Assembly reduces those revenues, then we respectfully ask that the local share be replaced **dollar-for-dollar and on the same schedule.**

The timing matters just as much as the amount. A county engineer cannot tell a contractor that the money will eventually arrive. Projects have bid dates. Contracts have deadlines. Construction has to occur during a limited season. Even a temporary interruption in funding can mean delaying a project for months or, in some cases, pushing it into the next construction season.

3. **Give local governments certainty.**

   County engineers do not plan roads and bridges one month at a time. These are multi-year capital programs. Right now, county engineers across Ohio are planning their 2027 construction programs. They are identifying projects, developing estimates, coordinating funding, preparing bids, and making decisions about what work can be completed next year. They need to know what resources will be available.

CEAO is not here today to tell the General Assembly whether it should or should not change the motor fuel tax. That is a policy decision for the legislature to make. We are here to explain what must be considered if a change is made.

- Protect the projects already underway.
- Protect Ohio's bonding commitments.
- Protect the local share of transportation funding.
- And if revenue is replaced, make sure it reaches counties, municipalities, and townships dollar-for-dollar and on the same schedule.

Because at the local level, these dollars are not numbers on a spreadsheet. They are the bridge a school bus crosses every morning. They are the county road carrying employees to work and products to market. They are the snowplow clearing that road in January. And they are the construction projects Ohio communities are counting on next spring.

CEAO appreciates the General Assembly including local transportation officials in this discussion. We stand ready to work with this Committee, the Administration, and ODOT on a solution that addresses the concerns surrounding the motor fuel tax while protecting the transportation system Ohio taxpayers have already paid to build and expect us to maintain.

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Committee, thank you for your time and consideration.