



Tom Balzer, President and CEO  
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## Proponent Testimony on HB 54

Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Ohio Senate Transportation Committee, good morning. My name is Tom Balzer, and I am the President & CEO of the Ohio Trucking Association. I am here today to testify as a proponent on HB 54, the Transportation Budget for FY 26-27. Specifically, I am here to express support of the Ohio Department of Transportation's initiative to expand access to truck parking in Ohio, and the importance of doing so for Ohio's truck drivers.

In our business, safety is always the number one priority in every area of operation. Perhaps the most basic example of that is finding a safe place to park. Nationwide, the lack of truck parking is a chronic issue. According to a report from the US DOT, 98% of drivers regularly experience problems finding safe parking, and 70% of drivers have been forced to violate hours-of-service rules to find safe parking, resulting in fatigued drivers and sometimes, also resulting in accidents. The same report found that truck parking shortage exists in every state and region and is most acute along major freight corridors<sup>1</sup>.

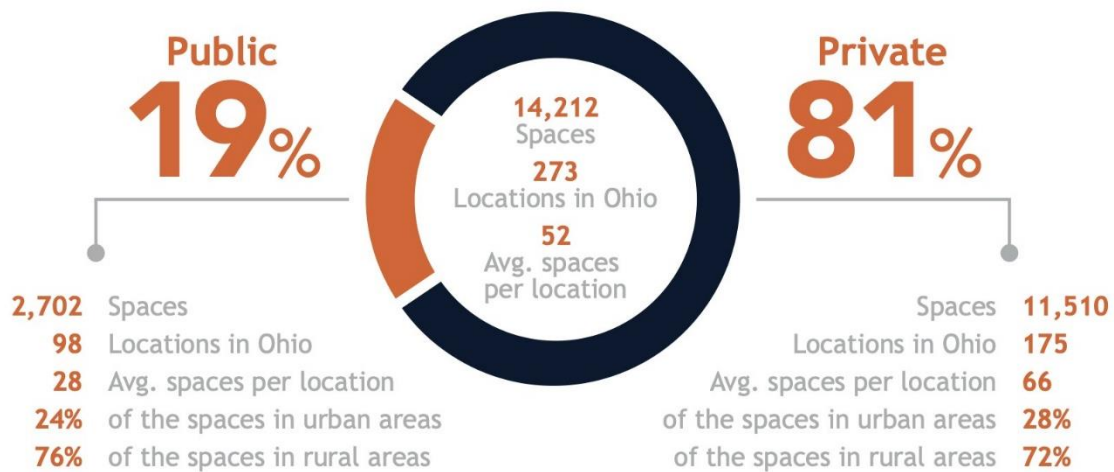
Just this month, the Ohio Department of Transportation released a study on the future needs of Ohio's transportation system and how our state can best prepare for the increased projected use. The study states:

*"Between 2020 and 2055, statewide commercial vehicle VMT is projected to increase by 44%...Limited truck parking along major freight corridors can lead to drivers parking in undesignated or unsafe locations. Time spent looking for parking also decreases the distance that a truck can travel since federal regulations limit hours of operation per day."*

The Ohio Trucking Association has been working with ODOT for years on addressing this issue, as the problem continues to grow alongside the growth of commerce of the state. As part of the FY26-27 Transportation Budget, ODOT is seeking appropriation authority to spend roughly \$200 million for around 900 new spots and has a broader plan to build just under 1500 spots in the next several years. We strongly support this aggressive, but necessary measure to address the existing problem and begin to curb the epidemic we are headed towards.

A comment we have recently heard from members of this committee is that a broader expansion of privately-owned spots is needed before further public dollars are spent.

The figure on the following page will show that **81%** of existing spots in Ohio are already privately held. As well, the ODOT proposal is seeking to leverage already-owned land, which keeps costs significantly down and allows the Department to create more spots.



Further, of the public spots that are already available, the majority of them are found on the Ohio Turnpike. See below for a further expansion of the data:



Access to parking is what drivers are asking for more than anything. A 2024 study from the American Transportation Research Institute conducted a survey of employee drivers, owner-operators, motor carrier executives, and other trucking industry stakeholders. All groups agree that truck parking is a top issue – with truck drivers revealing that access to parking is what they care about the most – even beyond their own compensation (which ranks number two)<sup>3</sup>.

It is imperative for Ohio to provide safe, reliable truck parking spots if it intends to continue with its aggressive economic development plans. The trucking and logistics industries feed Ohio's economy, and truck drivers are the backbone of that system. They are bound by strict hours of service rules that require them to plan their stops efficiently and provide no room for error when they do not have safe, reliable parking. These hard-working men and women deserve the rest they take and that is only possible if those who rely on the fruits of their labor invest in them. The data could not be clearer, and the message could not be any simpler: truck drivers need more parking.

The investment we are asking you to enable through this legislation is more than just a bunch of parking spaces. It is a message to Ohio's truck drivers that you see and hear them, that you value the work that they do to deliver the goods and services our economy and citizens rely on to run their

homes, and that you value their safety. We are asking that this initiative have your full support, and that you pass HB 54 expeditiously with all truck parking investments left intact. Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the committee, thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

## Sources:

- 1) American Trucking Association, Truck Parking <https://www.trucking.org/parking>
- 2) Ohio Department of Transportation, Strategic Transportation & Development Analysis, 2025  
<https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/programs/statewide-study/01>
- 3) American Transportation Research Institute, Critical Issues in the Trucking Industry, 2024