



Greater Cleveland  
Regional Transit Authority

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**Testimony of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority  
Before the Ohio Senate Transportation Committee  
In Support of House Bill 54  
Finance Hearing Room 2:30 pm March 4, 2025**

Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaeffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, good afternoon. My name is Dr. Floun'say Caver, and I serve as the Deputy General Manager of Operations, which includes Transit Police. I am honored to appear before you on behalf of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), Ohio's largest public transit agency.

Public transit is the backbone of Ohio's economy, ensuring that workers, students, seniors, and individuals with disabilities can reliably reach jobs, healthcare, and education. A strong transit system fuels economic growth, improves quality of life, and keeps Ohio competitive in attracting and retaining businesses. However, sustaining and enhancing this critical infrastructure requires continued state investment.

On behalf of our more than 2,400 employees and the riders we serve, I want to express our gratitude to Governor DeWine, the Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Ohio Legislature for your ongoing commitment to public transit. Your investments have had a direct and measurable impact, strengthening workforce mobility, advancing infrastructure improvements, and supporting economic growth throughout Northeast Ohio and the entire state.

Public transit is a critical economic driver in Ohio. Every one dollar invested in public transit generates approximately five in economic returns, benefiting local businesses, property values, and job creation.

Your past support has allowed us to make substantial advancements. In recent years, ridership has steadily increased as more Ohioans rely on transit for commuting, education, and essential services. Ensuring funding keeps pace with this demand is critical to sustaining our state's economic momentum.

Through state funding, GCRTA has been able to modernize its fleet and infrastructure. Over the last five state fiscal years (SFY 2020-2025), GCRTA has received over \$78 million in state transit funding through the Ohio Transit Partnership Program



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(OTP2/UTP) and, more recently, the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership (OWMP). This investment has enabled:

- The procurement of 40 new 40-foot buses, including 8 new 40-ft CNG buses in both SFY 2022 and SFY 2023, ensuring cleaner and more efficient transportation options.
- Critical heavy rail car replacements, electric vehicle deployment studies, and infrastructure enhancements, including LED signage and improved transit waiting environments.
- Expansion of Microtransit services through OWMP funding, including ConnectWorks, improving first-mile/last-mile connectivity and ensuring Ohioans can access jobs, education, and healthcare more effectively.
- Bus stop and shelter improvements at 44 locations, benefiting job seekers and daily commuters.

Despite its vital role, Ohio currently invests just \$6 per capita in public transit—one-tenth of the national average. Twenty percent of Ohio's counties lack adequate transit service, limiting access to jobs and healthcare and reducing Ohio's competitiveness in attracting new business investment.

We urge the Senate to:

- Increase annual transit funding to \$80 million by boosting GRF funding levels, ensuring Ohio's transit agencies can meet growing demand and leverage federal funding opportunities.
- Continue funding the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program at \$15 million per year to bridge critical workforce transportation gaps, particularly for job centers located outside traditional transit service areas.

Ohio's public transit agencies ensure that our most vulnerable populations—veterans, seniors, and individuals with disabilities—maintain their independence and access to essential services. Reliable transit allows these individuals to reach medical appointments, grocery stores, and community centers, improving their quality of life and enabling full participation in the economy.

For 50 years, GCRTA has been a leader in workforce development, economic growth, and mobility solutions for Ohioans. Failing to invest in transit will lead to fewer opportunities for Ohio workers, increased traffic congestion, and economic stagnation.



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Ensuring strong transit funding means strengthening Ohio's economic future, workforce readiness, and overall quality of life. A well-funded transit system provides a strong return on investment for the state, generating economic growth, job creation, and increased revenue from business expansion and workforce accessibility.

We must ensure Ohio remains competitive by prioritizing sustainable and effective transportation solutions. Investing in transit means investing in Ohio's future economic development, workforce readiness, and quality of life. We appreciate your leadership in advancing public transit and respectfully urge the Senate to support increased investment and flexible policy solutions that will allow transit agencies to serve their communities effectively.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.