



*Nancy Cartmill
Chair*

*Christopher M. Chiles
Executive Director*

*KYOVA Interstate
Planning Commission*

*400 Third Avenue
Huntington, WV 25701
Tel: (304) 523-7434
Fax: (304) 529-7229*

Chairman Stoltzfus, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the House Infrastructure and Rural Development Committee:

My name is Chris Chiles, and I am the Executive Director of KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission (KYOVA). KYOVA is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Huntington, WV-KY-OH Urbanized Area acting through the West Virginia Department of Transportation/Division of Highways, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Ohio Department of Transportation, and locally elected officials in the KYOVA region. I provide this testimony today in strong support of plans to connect southern Ohio to the Interstate Highway System through the extension of Interstate 73, Interstate 74, and Interstate 75 (I-73/I-74/I-75).

KYOVA was formally organized on October 11, 1968. Its creation, via interstate compact, was the culmination of years of diligence and hard work that began in 1965 with the Huntington-Ashland-Ironton Area Transportation Study (HAIATS). KYOVA was formed as a result of the HAIATS to coordinate and administer transportation planning. To provide a recognized geographical area of activity, in 1966, the Bureau of the Census designated the urbanized area of Huntington-Ashland-Ironton as the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for the areas of: Cabell and Wayne counties, West Virginia; Boyd and Greenup counties, Kentucky; Lawrence County, Ohio; and the cities of Huntington, Ashland and Ironton.

As the MPO, KYOVA serves as a transportation planning agency and forum for regional transportation decisions. Its mission is to plan for an orderly, cost-effective, multi-modal transportation system for all citizens of the service area. KYOVA's Policy Committee and staff, with the support of local officials, coordinate with applicable state and federal agencies to promote a unified transportation system for the area for the effective movement of people, goods, and services. KYOVA is responsible for the annual dissemination of millions of dollars in federal transportation funds to conduct transportation-related studies and implement transportation projects.

KYOVA has completed multiple transportation studies and infrastructure projects in recent years to upgrade and improve U.S. Route 52 in Lawrence County, and to prepare for the future I-73/I-74/I-75 Corridor. The two largest transportation projects in southern Ohio are the recently completed Southern Ohio Veterans Memorial Highway (aka the Portsmouth Bypass) in Scioto County, and the forthcoming Chesapeake Bypass in Lawrence County. The Portsmouth Bypass is critical for future development in southern Ohio by increasing demand and reducing travel time for trucks and automobiles traveling north and south along U.S. Routes 23 and 52, while the Chesapeake Bypass will provide an improved



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route for trucks and automobiles traveling east and west through Lawrence County.

Interchange improvements at the intersections of U.S. Route 52/SR 93 and U.S. Route 52/SR 243 are expected to begin next fiscal year. A new roundabout and improvements at the intersection of U.S. Route 52 and Solida Road was recently completed; this interchange is also the entrance to The Point Industrial Park and Intermodal Facility. An updated US 52/SR 7 Safety Study Corridor Management Plan was completed in Fiscal Year 2021, and a US 52 Interchange Justification Study from CR 120 to CR 144 near Sam's Club and Wal-Mart was completed in Fiscal Year 2019.

Across the Ohio River in Wayne County, West Virginia, U.S. Route 52 has also been designated as the future I-73/I-74/I-75 Corridor. The West Virginia Division of Highways is in the process of upgrading and widening U.S. Route 52 to four lanes from Interstate 64 to the Prichard Intermodal Facility. This project is part of WV Governor Jim Justice's Roads to Prosperity Program, a program comprised of a series of funding measures that will generate an additional \$2.8 billion for transportation construction and maintenance projects. The upgrade and widening of U.S. Route 52 will cost around \$150 million and is currently in the Engineering and Environmental update Phase with a portion already graded. The connections between U.S. Route 52 in Ohio and West Virginia are also in various stages of upgrades, including the widening of I-64 in West Virginia between the U.S. Route 52 interchanges at Exits 1 and 6, and scheduled enhancements to the existing 17th Street West Bridge that connects both states across the Ohio River.

In conclusion, the Tri-State via KYOVA in coordination the West Virginia Division of Highways, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, and Ohio Department of Transportation has been preparing, and is ready, for the additional traffic from an extension of I-73/I-74/I-75. Chairman Stoltzfus, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the Committee – thank you for allowing me to have the opportunity to testify about the need to connect southern Ohio to the Interstate Highway System through the extension of Interstate 73, Interstate 74, and Interstate 75.

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