

March 8, 2021

The Honorable Stephanie Kunze  
Chair, Ohio Senate Transportation Committee  
Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Supporting Central Ohio Public Transit/COTA

Dear Chair Kunze,

We write to express our strong support for the restoration of \$70 million per fiscal year for public transportation funding in HB 74, the State of Ohio's biennial transportation budget.

The value of public transit to Central Ohio has been tested and proven during the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering thousands of customers to their essential jobs, food sources, social services, health care needs or to care for others. The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) employs nearly 900 frontline workers who have kept COTA operating every day, working more than 1.4 million hours since March.

The Ohio General Assembly has continued to invest significant dollars in workforce development as a means of providing Ohioans access to upward economic mobility and reducing reliance on government safety net programs. However, investing in short-term certificates or workforce credentials while defunding transportation will cause these investments to fall short of their intended return for Ohio families.

Ohio's transit systems generate \$3.6 billion in economic activity and create and support 180,000 private sector jobs. Ohio's public transit authorities advance economic opportunity while providing access to essential services to our most vulnerable populations, including veterans, seniors and those with developmental disabilities.

As the number of older adults and individuals with disabilities continues to grow, so do opportunities to improve current mobility options. Funding is critical in order to build on existing services to increase accessible, safe, and equitable mobility options by decreasing barriers to utilizing fixed route transit.

Because public transit is crucial for the recovery of Ohio's economy, we respectfully ask that the state budget maintain public transit funding at \$70 million per fiscal year.

Sincerely,



Cindy Farson  
Director

CC: Members, Ohio Senate Transportation Committee  
The Honorable Matt Huffman, President of the Ohio Senate  
Joanna M. Pinkerton, President/CEO, Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA)