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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Marcus Atkinson, I'm 36 years old and born and raised in Lorain County, Ohio. At the age of 1, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and at age 10 I was diagnosed with glaucoma. Because of my disability, I have never driven a car and though I have a bachelor's degree, my reliance on others for transportation has impaired me in both my personal and professional life.

Employment in Lorain County is difficult without your own means of transportation; also I have spent months admitted in the hospital, using tax payer money, because I could not attend a regularly scheduled doctor's appointment. A project like this would go a long way to help people like me and those who will come after me, so they do not have to deal with the hardship us who live in the county deal with.

I am deeply concerned by the proposed 2022-2023 transportation budget, which would cut state funding for public transportation by 90%. To cut public transportation funding now would be devastating to our community's long-term economic recovery and growth. Public transit systems generate \$3.6 billion in economic activity and create and support 180,000 private sector jobs.

I have seen firsthand, the county run bus system turn down the elderly or someone with disabilities who needed a ride to the doctor. Increased transit funding would improve employment in the county, our current means of transportation is not realistic as a way to get to and from work, school, doctors etc., the public bus system runs every 2 hours and covers very little of the county itself. There is no doubt the lack of transportation in the county has caused many of us with disabilities and of older age to suffer, simply because we cannot have personal means of transportation.

I made the decision a long time ago to do everything I can to help improve the lack of transportation services in Lorain County. Despite my disability, I am lucky to be college educated and have the ability to still help others. I feel it is my duty to do what I can to improve the lives of those like me, those who need the help but can't ask for it, or those who don't even know people are out here trying to make their lives better; this is why I have decided to help with this project in any way possible to make it a success.

Yes, we need to improve our transportation network in the county, so the elderly and those with disabilities can get to the doctor's, grocery store etc, but there's another component as

well, independence. There's a sense of self-worth and confidence that comes with being able to take care of oneself. It improves self-esteem, morale, and much more. Better transportation in Lorain County would go a long way in improving the county as a whole.

I implore you to work with your colleagues to restore the biennial transportation budget to the previous \$70 million.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Cc: State Senator Nathan Manning  
State Representative Gayle Manning  
State Representative Joe Miller  
State Representative Dick Stein  
Lorain County Commissioners  
Sharon Pearson, Lorain County Mobility Manager