



Senate Transportation Committee
 Sub. SB 74 – Opposition to Force Account Increases
 March 18, 2021

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation Committee:

The above organizations —Ohio Contractors Association, Associated General Contractors of Ohio, Mechanical Contractors Association of Ohio, National Electrical Contractors Association (Ohio), Transportation Advocacy Group of Northwest Ohio, Construction Employers Association, Affiliated Construction Trades of Ohio, Ohio Laborers’ District Council, International Union of Operating Engineers - Local 18, Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council, and the Indiana-Kentucky-Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters —represent commercial construction companies and labor organizations that build and renovate a wide variety of vertical and horizontal structures. Our members construct roads, bridges, schools, manufacturing facilities, water and sewer lines, office buildings, underground utilities, apartments and dormitories, parking structures, and utility and wastewater treatment plants... to name a few.

We are collectively opposed to the proposed force account limit increases for counties, municipalities and townships contained in the Senate’s Sub Bill of the Transportation Budget, Sub. H.B. 74. Raising force account limits takes work away from private sector contractors and their workforce, while expanding the projects local governments can do without competitive bidding. Simply put, it expands government at the detriment of private construction businesses and taxpayer dollars.

A force account limit is a monetary limit established in the Ohio Revised Code for counties, townships, municipalities and ODOT. If one of those governmental entities wants to perform construction work with their own workers and their own materials and equipment, an estimate of the project cost must be completed. If the estimate comes in under the statutory force account limit, the government entity may proceed on its own without putting the project out for a competitive bid. If the amount is over the estimate, the project must be put out to bid for private sector contractors to compete on.

Increasing force accounts allow local government public employees to perform more work traditionally done by the private sector employees, while adding additional government costs associated with purchasing, housing and maintaining equipment. It prohibits competitive bidding for Ohio’s public works contracts and raises the price of public improvements. The increased costs waste taxpayers’ hard-earned money and ultimately reduces the number of road and bridge projects that can be done.

The private sector is more efficient than the government. That is because private contractors and their workforce are experts at efficiently and safely constructing infrastructure projects because that is what we do, every day. Local government employees are not trained construction professionals, and this is “mission creep” at its worst. It comes at a high cost to taxpayers who will end up paying more so their local governments can perform the work that private sector contractors should be allowed to compete for.

Please protect private sector jobs and Ohio taxpayers by removing the force account threshold increases in Sub. H.B. 74.