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March 16, 2021

Matt Huffman, Senator
The Ohio Senate
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senate President Huffman and members of the Transportation Committee,

My name is Lori Mariucci. I have the privilege of serving more than 3500 individuals and families as the Superintendent/Executive Director of the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities. We provide services and supports for people with developmental disabilities.

At the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities, we focus on individuals and the community so persons served have greater access to employment, housing, and social opportunities. The primary key to making this happen is access to safe, reliable transportation.

Lucas County's prospects for economic growth will be greatly enhanced with a public transit system that covers the entire county and is sustainable. More people would have needed rides to employment, visitors would have access to easy transportation to the many tourist areas in Lucas County, and individuals with disabilities would have expanded access through the paratransit service to the community.

Removing the TARTA provisions from House Bill 74 is a short-sighted act that compromises a community on the move. Businesses need to locate where they know prospective employees have access to public transportation. The current TARTA charter requires a 100 percent vote by members for any service expansions or ballot issues, not a simple majority. This has allowed *minority* rule to govern the transit service. And this has not served our community well.

The restored language would allow, with a simple majority of the vote from TARTA members, an expansion of the service area to include all of Lucas County. A nearby hospital is not accessible to residents of East Toledo because it is in the city of

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Oregon, not serviced by TARTA. Likewise, employment opportunities in the Spring Meadows shopping areas are not offered to individuals with developmental disabilities because it, too, is outside the TARTA service area.

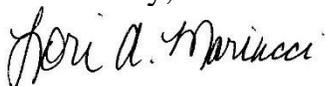
The majority vote by TARTA members would also allow a ballot issue to move forward that could change primary funding for TARTA from a property tax to a countywide sales tax, a more equitable and more sustainable funding process.

I would kindly ask that the amendment to the Transportation Budget bill sponsored by TARTA be included in the final bill. Every week, I discuss transportation in one way or another. If I could share a story briefly: At a recent vaccine clinic sponsored by the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities, The Lucas County Health Department, and ProMedica Health System, I was speaking with a young man who happened to be served by the Board of Developmental Disabilities. This man who lived in an outlying area of Toledo told me he had trouble getting a ride to the vaccine clinic because his transportation provider could not pick him up because they would not get reimbursed for the drive. This young man and I discussed options, one option we discussed was the use of TARTA. Did I mention this young man uses a motorized wheelchair? We cannot take transportation for granted. Transportation such as TARTA is a lifeline for people to get life-saving vaccines among other daily living activities.

In summary, this is an issue about the public citizens in Lucas County and the surrounding areas. We need to ensure quality service in a vibrant economy. Contributions are made daily by the citizens of this area. I am asking the State Senate to please restore the TARTA language that was pulled by Representative Derek Merrin.

I want to thank you and the members of the Transportation Committee for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Lori A. Mariucci
Superintendent/Executive Director

c: Senator Teresa Fedor
Senator Theresa Gavarone