



OHIO HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE PROPONENT TESTIMONY
Sub. House Bill 74 - Transportation Budget for FY 2022-23
Keary McCarthy, Executive Director

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of Substitute House Bill 74, the transportation budget for fiscal years 2022-2023.

On behalf of our bipartisan coalition of mayors in over two dozen of Ohio's largest cities, we would like to express our support for Substitute House Bill 74. A significant amendment added to bill in the Ohio House restored some of the proposed funding reductions to our public transit agencies. Public transit will play an important role in the most vital public policy challenges we all face, which is an effective, efficient, and equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines. Restoring much of the proposed cuts is important to support the mass-vaccination process, but also for the mobility and economic growth of Ohio's cities.

While we support the restoration of public transit funding, we would encourage the Senate Finance Committee to reconsider the Ohio House's removal of the distracted driving provisions that would have made our roads safer. As a coalition partner with FOR Ohio, we support the changes to make driving while handling any electronic wireless device a primary offense. The evidence is overwhelming that distracted driving is a very serious public safety issue and we know that passing stronger restrictions on distracted driving saves lives. According to FOR Ohio, of the forty-four other states that have passed various distracted driving laws, traffic-related deaths have markedly declined in the years following those law changes.

We would like to recognize the work the Governor and the General Assembly did in the previous transportation budget to ensure that Ohio and its local communities had the transportation infrastructure resources needed to sustain our roads and bridges – the arteries of our economy. While consumption and gas tax revenue have substantially declined due to the pandemic, the revenue increase two years ago have allowed local communities to keep our heads above water despite the unexpected revenue declines. We appreciate the allocation of \$126 million in federal aid to local governments to help offset some of these unexpected revenue losses.

We also, of course, appreciate the allocation of the local share of motor fuel tax revenue of \$357 million in fiscal year 2022 and in fiscal year 2023 to local programs. We also support ODOT's ongoing efforts to partner with local communities to improve safety at Ohio's 150 most dangerous intersections, as well as improvements to pedestrian safety in communities across the state.

We appreciate the committee's work on this bill thus far. We encourage the committee to reconsider its removal of the distracted driving provisions, and we encourage favorable passage of Sub. House Bill 74. Thank you for your time and attention to the perspectives of our bipartisan coalition of mayors.