

TO: Chairman Kunze, VC Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Antonio
Transportation Committee Members
FROM: Chris Bauserman, PE, PS,
Delaware County Engineer
DATE: March 19, 2021
**RE: Sub HB 74, Transportation Budget
FORCE ACCOUNT limits increase - SUPPORT**
County: Delaware County
Budget: \$35M

Sub HB 74 provides important increases to force account limits for counties and our local government partners. I have served as Delaware County Engineer for the past 25 years, during which our population has grown by over 350%. This rapid growth has brought about significant investment in expanding our local road and bridge system. Over the last five years Delaware County has awarded over \$100 million in publicly bid road and bridge construction contracts. During this same period, small road maintenance, culvert replacement and routine bridge improvement projects have been constrained and delayed by the existing force account limits.

We need the increased limits proposed in Sub HB 74 in order to perform the routine activities associated with owning and maintaining a public highway system. We need the ability to use our county workers to protect the significant capital investment that we have made in expanding our highway infrastructure. Each year construction material and operational costs increase while the force account limits remain static. As a result, each year our ability to maintain our local roads and bridges decrease accordingly. This is an issue in every county and in every local government agency of the State.

Increasing force account limits allows us to maintain important public assets in a cost effective and responsible manner. Ohio taxpayers expect that the extraordinary investment they make in transportation infrastructure, via the fuel tax and motor vehicle registration fees, is maintained and protected by Ohio's local government agencies. Increasing force account limits will dramatically improve our ability to meet the public's expectations. Thank you for your attention to this important issue and I respectfully ask for your support of Sub HB 74.