



**Douglas E. Cade, PE, PS**  
**County Engineer**  
1900 Lima Avenue  
Findlay, Ohio 45840  
419-422-7433

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To: Chairman Kunze, Vice Chairman Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Antonio  
Transportation Committee Members

From: Douglas E. Cade, PE, PS

Date: March 23, 2021

RE: **Sub HB 74, Transportation Budget**

**FORCE ACCOUNT Limits Increase - SUPPORT**

County: Hancock

Budget: \$ 6.79 million

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Chairman Kunze, Vice Chairman Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Antonio and Transportation Committee Members, I am in support of the addition of the language to increase the County and other local government force account limits in the Transportation Budget / Sub. House Bill 74.

As I am sure you are aware, the last time local Force Account Limits were increased was 2003, many aspects of construction have changed since that time, namely the cost of labor, equipment and construction materials. We have worked hard to be as efficient as possible and work within the limits that were given to us in 2003, but with construction and material cost inflation, we have gradually reduced the size of project that our team members can undertake. This reduction has gotten to the point that we cannot build a 20-foot bridge or widen 1-mile of narrow rural roadway without exceeding these limits.

For example, we have been working with ODOT to improve safety at intersections along State Route 15 east of Findlay. As part of those safety improvements, we are directing traffic from the small local roads to the nearest interchange along narrow County and Township Roads. We had planned to undertake some of these widening projects, but when putting the required Force Account Estimate together, we found that we exceed the \$30,000 per mile limit. This means that we are required to develop a full set of plans, advertise, bid and contract the project that lengthens the time to get the project constructed. In this particular example, the estimated cost to bid the project is \$132,430. If we were to utilize our own team members to construct this 4-day project, it would cost \$49,658, with only \$8,729 being our labor cost and \$40,929 in materials.

Another example is a project that is being bid near the Village of Vanlue in Amanda Township at a cost of \$268,910 to construct simple cul-de-sacs. The Township could have under taken this project at a cost of \$94,754 and significantly saved the taxpayers the cost of the project and nearly a year of design and construction to build this simple safety improvement.

Project Name	Local Force Account Cost	Time (Start to Completion)	Contract Cost	Time (Start to Completion)
Amanda TR 198 Cul de Sac	\$94,754	2 Months	\$268,910	20 Months
County Road 172 Widening	\$49,568	4 Months	\$132,430	12 Months
Portage TR 137 Bridge	\$204,762	6 Months	\$319,233	15 Months
Union TR 41 Widening	\$38,000	2 Weeks	\$70,940	5 Months

I have many other examples of projects, both roadway and bridge, that we have had to defer over several years due to the limits that were place on projects in 2003. We are not in the business of taking work away from construction contractors, but we are in the business to utilize the tax dollars that we have been given to maintain and improve our rural roadway system. We will continue to competitively bid our nearly \$3.8 million resurfacing program that is done cooperatively with the 17 Townships in Hancock County and bid out nearly \$1 million in bridges that we are responsible for on the County and Township Road system. With this proposed Force Account Limit increase, we will utilize our 23 team members to widen our narrow rural roads and build single span bridges that contractors cannot cost effectively construct due to their small size and short duration to construct.

I have also included with my written Testimony, letters from Liberty, Allen and Union Townships in Hancock County also supporting the Force Account Limit Increase for local governments.

We need this Force Account Limit Increase to allow our County to efficiently utilize the resources that we are given and stretch those dollars to continue to maintain and improve our local road and bridges, while still utilizing contractors for those projects that are beyond the capability and size of our team members.

I ask for your support of the addition of the language to increase the County and other local government force account limits in the Transportation Budget / Sub. House Bill 74.

Respectfully,

Douglas E. Cade, PE, PS  
County Engineer

Gary Reichley  
Union Township Trustee  
Hancock County, Ohio  
3590 Township Road 42  
Rawson, Ohio 45881

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March 21, 2021

State Senator Stephanie Kunze  
Senate Building, Room 137  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Township Force Account Limit

Dear Senator Kunze:

I am writing in support of the proposed increase to the Township Force Account Limit. As you are aware, we have not seen an increase to those limits since 2003 and has greatly hampered our efficiency in maintaining and improving our Road System in Union Township.

Recently, we have worked with our County Engineer to perform a basic 4- foot widening of a 0.8 mile narrow Township Road. Due to the current Force Account Limits, we are required to bid this project out to a contractor for an estimated cost of \$70,000. If we had the proposed limits in effect, we would be able to perform this work for \$36,000 and save the residents to Union Township and utilize those funds to improve other roads within the Township.

Thank you for your time and I ask for your support of the increased Force Account Limits in the current Transportation Bill.

Sincerely,



Gary Reichley  
Union Township Trustee  
Hancock County, Ohio

Jeffrey Hunker  
Liberty Township Trustee  
7018 Township Road 136  
Findlay, Ohio 45840

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March 21, 2021

State Senator Stephanie Kunze  
Senate Building, Room 137  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Township Force Account Limit

Dear Senator Kunze:

As a Trustee of Liberty Township in Hancock County and as the President of the Hancock County Township Association, I have seen first hand the need to increase the Force Account Limit for all governments in the Transportation Budget at the proposed limits.

As you know, the local government Force Account Limits have not been increased since 2003, although inflation rates, personnel costs, materials and equipment costs have increased year-over-year. We have seen some construction material costs being up 150-300% in that same time period.

As a Township Trustee we strive daily to use taxpayers' dollars most efficiently and get as much out of it as possible. By increasing the limits to reflect building today what we were able to build in 2003 is the most efficient use of the taxpayers' dollars.

I hope that you will keep the proposed Force Account increase for all local governments in the Transportation Budget at the proposed limits.

Respectfully,



Jeff Hunker  
Liberty Township Trustee

Kevin Flanagan  
Allen Township Trustee  
1132 Township Road 231  
Van Buren, Ohio 45889

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March 21, 2021

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As a Township Trustee we strive daily to use taxpayers' dollars most efficiently and get as much out of our funds as possible. Increasing the limits to reflect building today what we were able to build in 2003 is the most efficient use of the taxpayers' dollars.

I hope that you will keep the proposed Force Account increase for all local governments in the Transportation Budget at the proposed limits.

Respectfully,



Kevin Flanagan  
Trustee