

GUERNSEY COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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May 16, 2017

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Rodgers, and the members of the House Ways & Means Committee, my name is Paul Sherry and I am the Guernsey County Engineer.

The Guernsey County Highway Department operates on a budget of 4.4 million dollars supported primarily by two funds. The Gas Tax and the License Fee which generate \$2.5 million and \$1.7 respectively. We are responsible for more than 400 miles of County Roads and 313 bridges carrying both County and Township Roads.

Once the cost of plowing, mowing and drainage maintenance is accounted for, there is \$1.2 million left for capital investment into the transportation infrastructure. This equates to \$3,000 per mile of roadway improvements or a total of \$3,833 per bridge annually. Reversing the terms, with the cost of resurfacing a mile of road is approximately \$140,000 and replacing a simple short bridge will cost about \$250,000, we could resurface almost 10 miles of road each year, which would be more than we can sustain now. Unfortunately, with 400 miles of road, that would require a life cycle of 40 years between resurfacings. Bridges would need a lifecycle of 65 years, assuming no funding has gone towards roadwork.

Grant funds are scarce, competitive and require a shared amount match of money. Many roads and bridges do not qualify for funding and even having adequate resources to match the grant is a sizable challenge. We are thankful for the programs that do offer grant opportunities, but they are not enough to create a sustainable program. The longer this disparity continues without being addressed, the greater the deterioration to the lives and livelihood our citizens.

By finding new sources of revenue we can start to maintain a safe and attractive infrastructure system that will retain and draw new residents and businesses. By doing so, we will increase the tax basis, allowing for better improvements and continuing a positive cycle for our region.

I believe we share a common goal and purpose to provide the best place to live and work for all our citizens. Supporting H.B. 105 will be a step in that direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.