

Dear Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Uecker, Ranking Minority Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee:

Although I am a volunteer for Clevelanders for Public Transit and serve on the board of All Aboard Ohio, I am writing today as a private party who uses transit in Ohio and not in any official capacity for either of those organizations.

I am a resident of Cleveland and do not own a vehicle. The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority is my primary mode of transportation, but relying on transit has become increasingly difficult as state funding is decreased, fares are raised and service is reduced. Without significant improvements in transit service, my significant other and I are considering other options such as relocating to states that fund transit at levels that allow their agencies to offer better service than is available in Ohio today.

There has been considerable discussion over the past few weeks about the state of Ohio's roads and highways, and the need to maintain funding in order to keep our roadways in a state of good repair. I greatly appreciate the House Finance committee for also recognizing that transit funding has been dwindling for years. HB 62 allocates \$100 million in federal funds towards public transit -- this is a substantial and appreciated increase, but these funds would only allow for new capital projects. New stations, vehicles and transit lines can't improve the mobility of Ohioans without an increase in operating funds.

The vast majority of our transportation funding is used for roadway projects. As a result, we have created a transportation system that is becoming increasingly difficult for people such as myself who don't own a car. Cars present a significant cost burden and represent a significant percentage of income for many Ohioans, especially low-income individuals and families.

Without available and reliable transportation, it is impossible to access jobs, job interviews, medical appointments, school and everyday errands.

Although our constitution does limit gas tax revenues for highway purposes, the constitutional provision allows gas tax revenues to be applied toward "other statutory highway purposes." The legislature could declare that public transit and safe pedestrian and bike infrastructure is a highway purpose. Transit and other modes of transportation helps with decongestion and reduces roadway use, thereby reducing the need for intensive and costly highway maintenance.

As part of their 2015 Transit Needs Study, ODOT recommended for transit to be funded at a level of \$120 million per year beginning in 2015. By 2025, ODOT recommended increasing transit funding to \$185 million. As we approach 2020, I respectfully request that serious consideration is given to

increasing transit funding to \$150 million per year, including a source of dedicated funding for transit operations as well as setting aside additional funds for pedestrian and biking infrastructure.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Winn