



February 15, 2021

**Opposition Testimony to Discretionary Funding for Ohio Department of Transportation
Transit Budget**

Chairman Oeslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley and members of the committee:

Thank you for holding this hearing and providing the opportunity to offer testimony.

My name is Shannon Hursey and I am the Director of Transportation for a new 5311 Rural Public Transportation provider Access Tusc Transit, operating in Tuscarawas County. It is the mission of Access Tusc Transit to provide safe, reliable, affordable, and efficient transportation to our residents in Tuscarawas County.

As a former Mobility Manager for Carroll, Harrison, and Tuscarawas counties I saw the need for transportation on many different fronts. Tuscarawas County went through the calendar year 2020 without public transit and the need for affordable transportation was unbelievable, especially throughout the pandemic. As a new Transit Director, our clients need this service to get to work, for grocery shopping, dialysis treatment, and various other things in these rural counties.

We have clients who just need a way to go a couple of miles to the store to get food for their home. We also have clients that need our services because they have been in an accident and don't have a way to get to their doctors' appointments. There are clients who call us from the hospital because they have no way to get home and no one to pick them up. There are daily clients of ours that just need a way to get to work and make a living. We service a broad spectrum of needs but none the less it is a necessary service to help our clients in their everyday lives.

Ohio's need for more transportation funding is overwhelming but by increasing the funding which could help fund more transportation programs, improve vehicles and give Ohioans more options. The options that people using transportation services have will never equal those of people owning their vehicle have but would greatly help. In rural counties some clients live 30 or more minutes away from their doctor or the local grocery store or employment opportunity making it extremely difficult to get there without a personal vehicle.

Transportation in Ohio did not shut down throughout the pandemic. It proved to be a necessity for our clients to attend necessary and lifesaving appointments throughout this time. The transportation providers and drivers put their lives on the line by committing to continually operate services for those needing them.

Access Tusc Transit began service in the midst of this pandemic. I felt the need to start this service due to Tuscarawas County being without a 5311 Rural Transportation Service and the strong need for this was so clear to me throughout my years as a Mobility Manager, especially in these trying times. Without the funding support, our clients don't have other options to do normal, everyday things.

Please consider this funding with the mindset that if you didn't have a vehicle and had to rely on the transportation options available in your home county. Could you do things you want to do? Could you get to work every day? I know that my fellow 5311 Rural Public Transportation providers run a very tight operation

and are very mindful and grateful of the funding we receive and take our Directors duties very seriously knowing that funding is not guaranteed to us.

I once again thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for your consideration. Access Tusc Transit strongly opposes this decrease in funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Hursey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'S'.

Shannon Hursey

Director of Transportation

Access Tusc Transit

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