

**Ohio House Committee on Agriculture and Conservation**  
**Representative Michael Sheehy**  
**H.C.R. 42 Sponsor Testimony**  
**December 13, 2022**

Chairman Baldrige, Vice-Chair McClain, and members of the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide sponsor testimony in support of House Concurrent Resolution 42, which would express this body's support for AMTRAK expansion in the State of Ohio.

Until recently, passenger rail was a crucial means of transportation for Ohioans, connecting communities across the state with faster and more affordable transportation. Unfortunately, most Ohioans have had limited or no access to passenger rail since 1979, despite the fact it is more energy efficient per-passenger-mile than car and air travel. We have the chance to bring back passenger rail with assistance from the federal government.

A passenger rail corridor connecting the "Three Cs" alone is estimated to serve four hundred to five hundred thousand passengers per year and have an annual economic impact of almost \$130 million. Expansion of AMTRAK services is also expected to bring new and more frequent service to a host of communities, including Toledo, Elyria, Oxford, Crestline, and Springfield. Expansion will also include connections to our cities' other forms of public transportation, connecting our universities and Fortune 500 counties.

H.C.R. 42 would urge the Governor, Director of ODOT, and Director of the Ohio Rail Development Commission, to essentially raise their hand and say "Ohio is interested in these funds." It is important to understand that submitting an expression of interest to participate in the Corridor Identification program does not commit the state to any current or future costs. Once Ohio has expressed interest and identified potential corridors, the state would begin Track 1: Project Planning. The state, in collaboration with AMTRAK, would develop the scope, schedule, and budget for the planning effort, **without any money committed by the state. The federal government would provide Ohio \$500,000 to fund this research.** If we do not signal our interest, we will miss out on this money and research that would answer any questions the Governor or the General Assembly have about the viability and long-term impact of passenger rail in the state. Our neighboring states, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Kentucky, have all signaled their interest for these grants, and are supporting corridors that would traverse through Ohio. We should have a seat at the table.

Thank you for your consideration. I'd like to pass this along to my joint sponsor, Representative Adam Miller.