



March 10th, 2021

Re: Interested Party Testimony HB74

Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

As the Athens and Hocking County Mobility Manager with Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP) I often see the critical role public transportation plays in the overall health and growth of our community. From seniors accessing health care facilities, to individuals with disabilities getting to and from places of employment, to community members accessing healthy food, educational institutions, social service agencies, the list of the needs and uses of public transportation is endless. The daily positive impact having public and affordable transportation throughout our state cannot be overlooked. As we begin finding our way out of a global pandemic, this could not be more true.

Through the Athens and Hocking County Coordinated Transportation Plans, both of which are supported through ODOT funding, we know who needs public transit, what their destinations are, and what time they need our services. Help us continue to map and meet these needs by supporting Public Transportation in Ohio. These plans are critical for empowering the voices of community members who rely on the services provided by public transportation funding. The planning committees involved in these projects align a large and diverse group of community stakeholders, and bring together people across all subsections of our community who share in the vision of reliable and accessible public transportation for everyone who needs access to it.

We cannot address the identified needs of our communities with the proposed allocation amount for public transportation in the current version of the bill. I urge the committee to increase the proposed amount for public transportation to \$70 million annually so that we can continue the work that we do at a crucial time for our communities and state.

Sincerely,

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