



The Honorable Stephanie Kunze
Ohio State Senate, District 16
Chair – Senate Transportation Committee

Dear Senator Kunze,

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm writing to provide a shortline railroad's comments in support of those parts of House Bill 74 pertaining to the Ohio Rail Development Commission and rail/highway grade crossing safety in general. I am the business development manager for the Camp Chase Railway, which serves freight customers along a 15-mile branch line that runs from western Columbus, through Galloway, and eventually to Lilly Chapel in Madison County. I'm also the acting chairman of the Ohio Railroad Association.

Ohio boasts the third largest freight railroad network of any state (5,330 miles), trailing Texas and Illinois, which are much larger in land area. In a growing state such as Ohio, and with this extremely dense and robust rail network, it should be no surprise that we have more than one grade crossing per mile of railroad in the State. Accordingly, safety of the travelling public and railroad employees is of great importance. House Bill 74 proposes to allocate \$15 million per year to the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) grade crossing safety program. Through projects undertaken over this program, incidents at grade crossings have decreased by over 70% since the early 1990's, despite an increase in registered vehicles in Ohio. Having worked at ORDC for three years prior to entering the private sector, I can personally attest to the quality of this safety program and respectfully ask that you continue the General Assembly's good work of supporting it.

Although significant progress has been made towards the goal of eliminating accidents at grade crossings, many of the remaining accidents in recent years have taken place at crossings already equipped with flashing lights and gates. The ORDC has been taking a creative approach to evaluating further improvements to these crossings; however, greater attention must be given to travel dangers outside of the crossings themselves. The language to address distracted driving issues in the current form of House Bill 74 is a positive sign. We support this language and recognize its importance on the path to making our roads safer for motorists and train crews.

Thank you for your representation of District 16 and for your consideration of these items.

Respectfully,
Brendan C. Keener

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brendan C. Keener".

Manager – Business Development and Government Affairs
Camp Chase Railway
Acting Chairman – Ohio Railroad Association