

Senate Transportation Committee  
Chair Stephanie Kunze

Proponent Testimony on HB23  
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Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 23, Ohio's transportation budget.

The recent economic announcements in central Ohio are great news for Ohio. I think it's appropriate that the transportation budget is the 23<sup>rd</sup> bill numbered in the House because one of the biggest transportation issues impacting Ohio's ability to fully benefit from the central Ohio success is U.S. 23. The lack of efficient connectivity between the Toledo and Columbus regions along U.S. 23 make it difficult for the entire state to benefit from this success. The existing route has unpredictable travel times, which can make it difficult for companies to meet the demands of their customers. The inefficiency and unpredictability is primarily the result of 38 traffic lights between Waldo and I-270.

Unfortunately, the problem will not get better on its own. We expect that over the next two decades central Ohio will grow by more than a million jobs and more than a million residents. The existing route already has significantly more traffic than it was designed for, and truck traffic is expected to double over the next 20 years.

The opening of the Gordie Howe Bridge between Windsor and Detroit is expected to increase the amount of commercial traffic coming through the region. Canada is already our largest trading partner and that will continue to grow. The continued work on the Great Lakes – Mid-Atlantic corridor (connecting interstates 73, 74, and 75) will also create greater demand for improved access between the Toledo and Columbus regions. Ohio has already taken steps to improve a portion of the Great Lakes – Mid-Atlantic corridor with the opening of the Portsmouth bypass in Scioto County.

We fully support current efforts to increase safety along the existing 23 corridor in Delaware County. However, we believe that a two-pronged solution to the problem is necessary. It is critical that a true long-term solution be implemented for the continued economic success of the entire state.

I would respectfully request that the \$10 million in funding requested by the Governor and the House remain in the budget and that the study priority remains the connection between northwest and central Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration.