

OHIO SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Testimony for Public Transit Funding

March 8, 2023

Good morning! 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.

My name is Chasilyn Carter, and I am the Director for Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit in Fairfield County. Our agency is a rural demand response transportation which means we are going door to door or curb to curb to provide transportation to citizens throughout Fairfield County. In addition, we operate five deviated fixed routes, starting next week, it will be six deviated fixed routes, to help increase our efficiency and make services more accessible to the public.

In 2022, we provided 111,259 trips using 24 buses for a total operating cost of a little over \$2.0 million. As a rural transit agency, we do not have dedicated funding, 50% of this total comes from federal reimbursement and 50%, we have to come up with in local GRF, contract revenue, advertising, and state GRF. As a smaller agency, you can imagine the difficulties coming up with a million plus dollars.

Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit provides trips for a wide range of demographics and purposes. We transport 4-year-olds up to 90+ years. The residents of Fairfield County use us for medical appointments, school transportation, grocery trips, and daily commutes to work. In 2022, over a third of our trips provided were for the elderly and disabled. Another third was for workforce transportation.

Fairfield County is one of the fastest growing counties in Ohio. We have 3000 plus businesses and manufacturing remains an important component in our local economy. With the growth and launch of new businesses, manufactures, and local service agencies, a consistent concern in every planning session and meeting is how are we getting our clients or consumers here? Transportation needs continue to grow in this economy. Our transit agencies across Ohio are providing services to much needed areas and for much needed services in our communities. And the demand is still more than we can provide. Public Transit is an important component in any initiative or for any planned growth the state is planning.

Our mission at Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit is *Enhancing lives every day by moving people and increasing mobility to live independently through safe, professional, and reliable public transportation.* I ask you not to support transit funding for our

agencies but for the citizens of Ohio. Having access to transportation increases the likelihood of citizens utilizing medical services, it boosts the economy by providing access to businesses, it gets people to work lowering our unemployment rates and it gives our citizens a better quality of life by providing a consistent mode of transportation.

Thank you, Mrs. Chairwoman and the Transportation Committee, for your time and for allowing us to come advocate for such an important service in our society.