



## COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO

November 15, 2018

Chairman Oelslager  
Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Passage of HB 415

Chairman Oelslager:

On behalf of the Ohio Municipal League, Ohio Township Association and County Engineers Association of Ohio, we respectfully request a hearing and passage of House Bill 415. This important piece of legislation would create a new revenue source for funding transportation without raising taxes.

Specifically, HB 415 will allocate one-half of any surplus revenue in the state's general fund at the end of a fiscal year to a new Local Government Improvement Fund that will then be distributed to counties, municipalities and townships. Utilizing existing surplus funds to reinvest in Ohio infrastructure will create long-term, tangible capital assets. In addition to the immediate creation of construction jobs, safer and stronger transportation infrastructure facilitates economic development growth for years to come.

Ohio has one of the top ten largest highway systems in the United States, the second largest inventory of bridges and the fourth highest volume of traffic. The state's transportation system includes nearly 122,000 road miles and over 43,000 bridges.

Despite the crucial role transportation infrastructure plays in the vitality and future of Ohio, our roads and bridges are failing Ohioans. The American Society of Civil Engineers assigned Ohio a D+ for its 2017 infrastructure report card. The Ohio Department of Transportation's Access Ohio 2040 projects a \$14 billion shortfall in its funding needs through 2040. Some studies report that as much as 17% of Ohio's public roads are in such poor condition that it costs the average Ohioan \$475 in vehicle repair costs annually. Additional money is imperative to sufficiently maintain and service safe roadways for Ohioans and the countless individuals that travel on them.

The need to invest in infrastructure is critical, as the local governments responsible for maintaining hundreds of thousands of lane miles lack the resources to do so. The last gas tax increase in Ohio, which was two cents, was back in 2005. Furthermore, the rise in the use of hybrid vehicles has led to lower gas tax revenues at the state and local level. The reduction in the Local Government Fund (LGF) over the past several years, compounded with the loss or reduction in other local revenue sources, has left local governments across the state struggling to fund improvements and forcing higher taxes at the local level.

An investment in local road improvement is an investment in Ohio, its citizens and its economic success. We strongly urge the Senate Finance Committee to hear and favorably pass House Bill 415. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Kent Scarett  
Ohio Municipal League

Matthew J. DeTemple  
Ohio Township Association

Dean C. Ringle  
County Engineers Association of Ohio