

Today, Governor DeWine signed the State's Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 biennial transportation budget into law. The Governor's signature follows a flurry of action during last week's legislative session where the leaders of both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate worked together to pass the bill without the need of a conference committee. Furthermore, Governor DeWine once again signed the transportation budget today without exercising his line-item veto authority. This bipartisan budget includes \$8.3 billion in spending as well as modifications for renewal periods for driver's licenses. Additional policy initiatives and spending priorities can be found below. If you would like to read a complete list of all provisions contained in the bill, please click [here](#).

**Public Transit Funding:**

The Governor's proposed executive budget severely cut discretionary General Revenue funding (GRF) for public transit, reducing it from \$70 million in the previous biennium to \$7 million. However, through the extraordinary advocacy efforts of public transit agencies, funding was ultimately increased by the Ohio Legislature through a combination of GRF and Federal dollars totaling \$74 million in total spending annually.

**Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA):**

HB 74 also contains a provision permitting a majority of subdivisions to allow Lucas County to join TARTA. This change will ultimately allow voters to decide how TARTA is funded in the future. This change will provide an opportunity for this transit agency to grow and adapt meet the transit needs of throughout Lucas County.

**Driver's License Changes:**

The budget extends the time period that Ohio drivers are required to take a vision test for their license. Normally, the test must occur every four years but under the budget it is required every eight years, with some caveats. This change only applies to Ohioans between the ages of 21 and 65 and only applies to license renewals. Combined with the ability to renew your license online after four years, this provision will ultimately reduce the frequency of your trips to the BMV.

**Replacing Paper Documents with Electronic Documents:**

The bill makes several changes to move toward electronic documents instead of paper documents. These include authorizing registrars to confirm proof of ownership electronically when the owner first registers the vehicle. Additionally, the bill specifies that "certificate of title" and "title" include both physical and electronic copies of a motor vehicle certificates of title. It also allows for electronic delivery of registration certificates instead of through regular mail.

**Specialty License Plates:**

Previously, specialty license plates were required to meet certain sales thresholds to remain in production. However, lawmakers included a provision in HB74 that eliminates these thresholds. This will allow specialty plates that support many important groups such as veterans, various school districts and philanthropical causes to continue to exist without risk of being discontinued.

**Highway Safety:**

Language was included in this budget that would require the opening of closed weigh stations and repurposes them as overnight parking for commercial vehicles. The goal of this is to provide additional rest options for commercial truck drivers while traveling in Ohio. Additionally, the requirements for inspecting bridges have been decreased from an inspection every 12 months to an inspection every 24 months. This may seem counterproductive on its face, however the legislature heard from various County Engineers that supported this change. They stated that it will allow them flexibility to focus resources on inspecting problematic bridges instead of routinely inspecting bridges in excellent condition.

**Additional Spending:**

- \$318 million for highway safety projects
- \$2.6 billion for other state-maintained roadway improvements
- \$2.4 billion for local roadway improvements
- \$116 million for the Public Works Commission, including \$14 million for emergency road-slip repair
- \$8 million for electric vehicle charging station grants through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency