



County Engineers Association of Ohio

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Champaign County

County Engineers Association of Ohio

Public Testimony Regarding Vehicle Registration Permissive Tax
for Champaign County

Tuesday, April 7, 2015

Dear Commission President Bob Corbett and Champaign County Commissioners
Faulkner and Hess:

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. My name is Fredrick Pausch, and I am the Executive Director of the County Engineers Association of Ohio (CEAO). I speak on behalf of all 88 County Engineers around the state.

It is my job today to share with you what exactly is going on at the state and federal levels in regards to transportation funding: County Engineers are responsible for 26,900 bridges and 29,088 miles of urban and rural roadways that are vital to the combined growth and prosperity of the state of Ohio. And, job number one is the traveling safety of our constituents and the visiting, traveling public.

A 2008 report from the Federal Highway Administration stated that Ohio ranks 5th in the nation in the number of local bridges classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Recent surveys have concluded that \$770 million is needed for critical repairs to more than 6,000 Ohio county bridges with deficient

The County Road to Success and the Bridge to the Future

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ratings. Currently, Ohio's 29,088 miles of county roads require more than \$230 million annually in resurfacing costs alone. However, the federal gas tax hasn't been increased since 1993, and Ohio's state gas tax has not been increased since 2003.

Our goal is to enable Ohio's citizens, businesses and visitors to travel and move goods about the state in a safe and efficient manner.

The need for adequate, consistent and reliable funding for Ohio's local infrastructure is now more critical than ever due to recent inflation costs in the construction industry. For example, material costs for road and bridge improvements have doubled and even tripled over the past 10 years, forcing County Engineers to reduce in scope or delay many needed capital improvements.

I applaud County Engineer Stephen McCall and all the Champaign County Commissioners for reaching out to the citizens of Champaign County to comment on this proposal. ODOT is responsible for only 16% (19,256 centerline miles) of public roads in the state; this leaves local governments responsible for the majority of the public roads at 84% (or 102,085 centerline miles). Local governments include counties, townships and municipalities.

Currently in Champaign County:

210 Total Bridges

6 Bridges that are either SD or FO.

0 Posted Bridges that need immediate help.

65 Bridges over 50 years old.

Those bridge numbers are extremely good for an Ohio County.

However, now let's look at the costs to maintain existing 239 miles of county roads.

Most county engineers like to resurface roads every 10 years and I think Mr. McCall is on pace for every 12 years.

239 miles of county roads translate into 478 lane miles that if were paved with asphalt would cost: $478 \times \$75,000 = 3.6$ million per year on a 10 yr. cycle

Obviously, this number would be almost the entire budget of Champaign County each year and that's why there has to be a balance and the need to chip and seal a lot of county roads at around \$13,000 per lane mile.

Currently there are 29 Ohio counties that have passed all 3 of the \$5 permissive license tag fees for their county.

CEAO has asked the state legislature during the Transportation Bill and Budget Bill process to funnel more monies directly to Counties. There seems to be no interest right now by either Columbus or Washington D.C. to increase gasoline taxes, and down at the Statehouse the first thing they ask us is if the locals have exhausted all their options in raising permissive fees at the local level.

We also provided three examples how they could do this without raising taxes at the statewide level.

1. Ohio Turnpike Monies - \$1.5 Billion dollars
2. CAT TAX monies - Share of \$140 Million dollars
3. Picking up electric and hybrid vehicles

The legislature has set up a Joint Legislative Task Force on Department of Transportation Funding. The Task Force shall examine the funding needs of the Ohio Department of Transportation. The Task Force also shall study specifically the issue of the elimination of the Ohio motor fuel tax. The Task Force shall issue a report containing its findings to the General Assembly not later than December 15, 2016.

To everybody in this room: I wishI could sound the bugle horn and tell you that the Calvary will be coming to save the needs of Champaign County in the next year, but right now I think it is wise as a county to "circle the wagons" and try to deal with this problem of aging infrastructure on your own.

And, I applaud the foresight to try and develop this path. In the long run, the citizens of Champaign County will be safer, have increased mobility and be braced for future challenges.

I'll be happy to try to answer any questions that you might have.....