

# OHIO'S TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PROBLEM: An Emerging Crisis



Ohio's roads, highways and bridges are critical factors in to our state's overall prosperity. Unfortunately, Ohio's ability to maintain a safe, efficient and effective transportation infrastructure is in jeopardy as the state faces a major shortage of reliable funding for our roads and bridges. Unless action is taken soon, the system will continue to fall into disrepair and become further congested – damaging the overall vitality of our state and the safety of the people who live here.

Fix Our Roads Ohio (FOR Ohio) is a statewide coalition of Ohioans who share an interest in the future of our state's safety, economy and lifestyle. The coalition is working to educate Ohio citizens and our lawmakers on the critical needs of Ohio's transportation infrastructure and is advocating for a long-term, dedicated funding solution to invest in Ohio's roadways and bridges. We agree with Ohio Department of Transportation Director Jack Marchbanks, who has said, "We are facing a future where we will clearly not be able to maintain the quality of the system we have, let alone improve upon it. This will endanger the safety of every single person who travels Ohio's transportation network."

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The primary source of road and bridge funding in the state is through the Motor Fuel User Fee, established in 1925. Currently, the federal fee is 18.4 cents per gallon and the state fee is 28 cents per gallon. The federal fee has remained unchanged since 1993, and the last adjustment to the state fee occurred in 2005. Due to inflation, the purchasing power of Ohio's 28 cents per gallon fee has significantly diminished to a value of only 18 cents in 2019 dollars.

To generate revenue in the short term, the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission borrowed against future toll income by issuing bonds for \$1 billion in August 2013 and again in 2018 for \$550 million. The entirety of those funds will be encumbered for specific projects by the end of June 2019 and the state will be paying on the debt until 2048.

Due to the conclusion of the Ohio Turnpike Bond Program and the impact of inflation on the motor fuel user fee, the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT's) projected capital program is dropping from \$2.4 billion in state fiscal years 2014 and 2015 to \$1.5 billion in state fiscal year 2020 which begins on July 1, 2019. That is a \$900 million reduction in just five years.

## HOW DO WE FIX IT?

A lack of adequate funding to invest in Ohio's transportation system will negatively impact our state's economy and quality of life for every citizen. In a [case statement](#), FOR Ohio offers a list of policy options for the DeWine Administration and the Ohio General Assembly to consider. Those include phased in increases to Ohio's Motor Fuel User Fee and indexing the fee so it keeps up with inflation, levying an annual fee on electric-powered vehicles, studying future funding alternatives that account for technological advancements and identifying a dedicated funding source to better support public transit.

## THE COST OF INACTION

The anticipated shortfall in transportation funding will eliminate funding for new projects designed to add capacity and relieve congestion on Ohio roads. It will also delay other needed maintenance and upgrades to existing bridges and roadways. This will send a negative ripple through Ohio's economy as road conditions worsen and construction jobs are lost. Beyond these critical existing needs, the future of transportation will include advanced technology such as autonomous vehicles and smart mobility. Ohio has been a leader in the development of these innovations, however at current funding levels, the state will be unprepared to build the infrastructure for tomorrow when it's unable to maintain its existing system today.

### OHIO AT A GLANCE

- 2nd largest inventory of bridges
- 3rd largest in freight volume
- 4th largest interstate highway system (based on lane miles)
- 6th in the country in total Vehicle Miles Traveled, at 118.6 billion miles annually



## OUR COALITION

Fix Our Roads Ohio (FOR Ohio) is a coalition of stakeholders that have united in an effort to educate state leaders on the critical needs of Ohio's transportation infrastructure, and to advocate for a dedicated funding solution that provides long term, smart investment in Ohio's transportation future.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ohio Municipal League  
County Commissioners Association of Ohio  
Ohio Council of County Officials  
County Engineers Association of Ohio  
Ohio Township Association  
Ohio Mayors Alliance  
Northeast Ohio Mayors and City Managers Association  
Cuyahoga County Mayors and City Managers Association  
Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association  
Ohio Rural Development Alliance  
Ohio Public Transit Association  
Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association

### BUSINESS

Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber  
Columbus Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Cleveland Partnership  
Greater Akron Chamber Of Commerce  
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce  
Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association  
AAA Clubs of Ohio  
Dayton Area Logistics Association  
Ohio Restaurant Association  
Ohio Manufacturers' Association  
Clean Fuels Ohio  
UPS

### TRANSPORTATION

American Council of Engineering Companies of Ohio  
Flexible Pavements of Ohio  
Ohio Trucking Association  
Ohio Aggregates and Industrial Minerals Association  
Ohio Contractors Association  
Transportation Advocacy Group of Northwest Ohio  
Ohio Association of Movers  
Ohio Prestressers Association  
American Society of Civil Engineers  
Ohio Concrete  
UNITED Equipment Dealers Association  
Ohio Equipment Distributors Association

### REGIONAL COUNCILS

Ohio Association of Regional Councils  
Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS)  
Belomar Regional Council and Interstate Planning Commission  
Brooke-Hancock Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission  
Buckeye Hills Regional Council  
Clark County-Springfield Transportation Coordinating Committee  
Eastgate Regional Council of Governments  
Erie County Regional Planning Commission  
KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission  
Licking County Planning Commission; Licking County Area Transportation Study  
Lima-Allen County Regional Planning Commission  
Logan-Union Champaign Regional Planning Commission  
Maumee Valley Planning Organization  
Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC)  
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)  
Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council  
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)  
Northeast Ohio Four-County Regional Planning & Development Organization  
Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association  
Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission  
Richland County Regional Planning Commission  
Stark County Regional Planning Commission  
Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG)  
Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission

**FOR OHIO**  
FIX OUR ROADS OHIO  
*Better Transportation for Working and Living*

