

ACEC Ohio Advocacy Update



As the 136th General Assembly moves forward, ACEC Ohio is closely monitoring several key pieces of legislation that will impact the engineering and consulting industry. Below are the primary advocacy items currently under review:

HB 54 - Transportation Budget Bill

The Transportation Budget Bill (HB 54) is progressing through the legislative process, with formal hearings commencing in early February. Given the March 28, 2025, deadline, there is significant momentum to pass the bill ahead of schedule.

A comparison document between the Governor's version and the House amended version was released on February 18, 2025. Key provisions of interest to ACEC Ohio members include:

- Increased earmark of \$9M per fiscal year for Transportation Improvement Districts (TIDs).
- Establishment of the Road Safety Pilot Program.
- Creation of the Ohio Airport Grant Program Fund to support airports not receiving FAA grants.
- Requirement for ODOT to notify county commissioners or township trustees 30 days before bidding chip seal or fog seal projects.
- Formation of a new Division of Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) within ODOT.
- Authority for the Ohio Department of Public Safety to enter agreements with out-of-state toll transportation facilities.
- Commissioning of a third-party study on ODOT's pavement selection process.
- Updates to Ohio traffic control device regulations to align with the federal MUTCD.

- Increase of the competitive bidding threshold for OTIC projects from \$50K to \$250K.
- Adjustment of ODOT Director's authority to modify contract quantities based on inflation.
- Removal of \$5M in annual funding for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).
- Requires ODOT to conduct a feasibility study for an Interstate Route 73 corridor, primarily along current U.S. Route 23, stretching from Toledo to Chesapeake, OH by December 31, 2026 and reserves \$2 million for the study.

[Click here for HB 54 comparison document.](#)

Today, the House Finance Committee adopted an omnibus amendment ([click here for amendment](#)), the bill will now go to the full House for a vote tomorrow. The bill will move to the Ohio Senate for hearings, ACEC Ohio will keep members updated.

HB 96 - General Revenue Fund (GRF) Budget Bill

Governor DeWine's Executive Budget includes notable policy changes, although the State's financial resources are more constrained than in the previous GRF budget.

The GA Committee is evaluating language requested by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) regarding projects under \$4 million involving a Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) and Design-Build (DB). This change moves to a one-step process and concern is how will Qualification-Based Selection (QBS) be used. [Click here for HB 96 information.](#)

HB 98 - Workforce Programs

Introduced by Representative Nick Santucci, HB 98 aims to enhance workforce development by establishing the Community Connectors Workforce Program. This initiative is designed to link high school students with professionals in various fields, including engineering, to inspire career interest.

The bill includes an \$8 million appropriation for program implementation. ACEC Ohio is seeking feedback from the Government Affairs (GA) Committee on whether to formally support the legislation. [Click here for HB 98 information.](#)

SB 11 - Non-Compete Agreements

Senators Bill Blessing and Bill DeMora introduced SB 11 to regulate the use of non-compete agreements. The bill responds to concerns that non-compete clauses are being applied too broadly across various industries, including food service, manufacturing, and nursing.

ACEC Ohio is evaluating the bill's potential impact on engineering firms, particularly regarding protections for shareholders within professional services firms. Discussions within the GA Committee suggest advocating for a "carve-out" to exempt these shareholders from the bill's restrictions. [Click here for SB 11 information.](#)

ACEC Ohio remains committed to advocating for policies that support the engineering industry. We encourage members to stay engaged and provide feedback on these legislative efforts to ensure that the interests of Ohio's engineering professionals are well represented. [Click here for bill monitoring report.](#)

If you have any comments on what is mentioned in this article, or any other bill ACEC Ohio is monitoring, please reach out to me.

~Beth