

## ACEC Ohio Advocacy Update: Legislative Progress and Key Issues in the 136th General Assembly



As the 136th General Assembly progresses into its third month, legislation is advancing, and ACEC Ohio continues to closely monitor several key pieces of legislation that will impact the engineering and consulting industry.

### **HB 54 - Transportation Budget Bill**

The Transportation Budget Bill (HB 54) is progressing through the legislative process, with formal hearings started in February. The bill passed the Ohio House 97-0 on February 26th with hearings in the Ohio Senate this month. The bill was voted out of the Senate Transportation Committee yesterday with 21 additional amendments ([click here](#)) and is set to be voted on by the full Senate today. Senator Patton, Chair of the Transportation Committee, expressed his hope that the bill will bypass a conference committee, which is typically convened for budget bills to reconcile differences between the Executive, House, and Senate versions.

Key provisions on the Senate version:

- Removed and then Restored the creation of an ODOT Division of Advanced Air Mobility.
- Codifies in permanent law the ability for ODOT to enter into IDIQ contracts limited to 2 per ODOT's 12 Districts and no more than \$2 million per contract.
- Prohibits the ODOT Director from unilaterally altering terms of a prior agreement with a municipal corporation for road construction or maintenance.
- Provides for indemnification of contracting around certain rail lines in the Brent Spence Bridge corridor to facilitate surety bonding.
- Reinstated \$3.5M in annual funding for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) and added \$13.5M per year to Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program.

- 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, changed allocation to \$1.5 million for the study from \$2 million.
- Requires ODOT and OTIC to form a joint plan regarding the feasibility of connecting US-23 with I-71. Earmarks \$500,000 for the study which must be completed in 3 months.
- Require ODOT to assist with snow and ice removal on state highways within villages under certain conditions.
- Mandate the Ohio Turnpike & Infrastructure Commission complete a feasibility study on a new interchange and access point to the Ohio Turnpike at approximately mile marker 100 near Clyde by December 31, 2026.
- Removed the creation of the Ohio Airport Improvement Fund.

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

[\*Click here for ACEC Ohio Testimony.\*](#)

### **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 an interested party on this piece of legislation. [\*Click here for ACEC Ohio Testimony.\*](#) We have met with the sponsor; Senator Blessing and he understand our concerns and finds them reasonable. We are working with the Ohio Chamber on language should this bill move forward as the business interests in Ohio are opposed to the bill as written. [\*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.

If you have any comments on bills ACEC Ohio is monitoring, please reach out to me.

~Beth