



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.B. 40 of the 129th G.A.

Date: February 14, 2011

Status: As Introduced

Sponsor: Rep. Damschroder

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Makes the Ohio Turnpike Commission responsible for grade separation repair, maintenance, and replacement where the Turnpike intersects with county and township roads

State Fiscal Highlights

- The Ohio Turnpike Commission (OTC) will incur significant new costs to perform major maintenance responsibilities on grade separations constructed for county and township roads to cross the Ohio Turnpike. In the near term, these new responsibilities will likely be focused on correcting slope failures on grade separations in Sandusky County, where there are currently 11 grade separations with failing embankments. In the long term, it may be that embankments in other counties fail or other major expenses associated with the grade separations appear in the future.
- While the costs to perform major maintenance will vary depending on the county and the extent of the work involved, a major expense will be repairing overpass quadrants with failing embankments. The construction costs to repair one quadrant of an overpass are likely to be in the \$150,000 to \$250,000 range, not including engineering costs.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- By requiring the Turnpike Commission to make repairs at grade separations, the bill will yield savings for counties and townships that maintain roads that intersect the Ohio Turnpike. However, the current problems with failing embankments are confined to Sandusky County, where there are 11 Turnpike grade separations with slope failures that are in need of immediate repair.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Overview

The bill makes the Ohio Turnpike Commission (OTC) responsible for the major maintenance and repair and replacement of grade separations at intersections of any Ohio Turnpike project with county and township roads. According to the bill, "major maintenance" relates to all elements constructed as part of or required for a grade separation, including box culverts, bridges, pile, foundations, substructures, abutments, piers, superstructures, approach slabs, slopes, approaches, embankments, railing, guardrails, drainage, facilities, inlets, catch basins and grates, fences, and appurtenances.

The bill would resolve a disagreement between OTC and Sandusky County over who is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the grade separations constructed for county and township roads that cross the Ohio Turnpike. OTC maintains that counties or townships with roads traveling over the Ohio Turnpike are responsible for these major maintenance responsibilities as well as the routine maintenance functions listed in the bill, while Sandusky County believes major maintenance is OTC's responsibility.

Fiscal effects

New OTC costs and related county and township savings

Under the bill, OTC would assume responsibility for major maintenance, repair, and replacement of all 134 grade separations at intersections of the Ohio Turnpike and county and township roads. In turn, counties and townships would be relieved of these expenses. Making OTC responsible for the overpass structures will create significant new costs in the near term, due primarily to failing embankments along a number of county and township roads crossing the Ohio Turnpike in Sandusky County. In that county, 11 of the 30 county and township roads crossing the Ohio Turnpike have failing embankments and are in need of immediate repair.¹ Indeed, several overpasses in Sandusky County are closed to traffic. No other county has reported such failures. Therefore, any new costs OTC incurs will probably be confined to Sandusky County in the near term. However, as a result of the bill, OTC will be responsible for repairing grade separation problems that occur at the intersection of county and township roads in the future.

¹ OTC has committed to repairing the failing embankments on one such road (Township Road 226 in Riley Township) because failure there occurred five years after OTC did embankment work as part of a bridge replacement project in 2000. Assuming OTC authorizes award of a contract for the repair, work is likely to begin on this project this spring.

Ultimately, the cost to repair failing embankments will vary by project, depending on the work required. However, OTC estimates that the cost to repair one quadrant of an overpass is likely to be between \$150,000 and \$250,000, not including engineering costs. If all four quadrants of an overpass require repair, this means that the cost, excluding engineering work, would be in the \$600,000 to \$1 million range.

Future OTC costs

Although the immediate grade separation problems appear to have occurred in Sandusky County, embankments in other counties could also fail in the future. Many of the Ohio Turnpike's embankments alongside intersections with county and township roads were constructed in the 1950s, when the Ohio Turnpike was built. In total, there are 134 grade separations along the Ohio Turnpike. While it is difficult to determine how much OTC may need to spend on future grade separation repairs, the costs could range from minimal for small repairs to several hundred thousand dollars, if not more, on others. With OTC taking on major maintenance responsibilities at these grade separations, funding for other operating and capital needs could be reduced.