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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Maintenance and repair agreements

- Clarifies that the Department of Transportation (ODOT) may not unilaterally terminate or modify certain highway maintenance and repair agreements without the consent of the participant municipal corporation, unless the original agreement stipulates otherwise.

### Regional transportation improvement projects (RTIP)

- Authorizes the expansion of the membership of an RTIP governing board to include the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the JobsOhio network partner that covers the majority of the area encompassed by the RTIP or the CEO's designee.

### Data analysis

- Requires ODOT to collect and analyze data on certain building permits to assess if ODOT's current transportation facilities are adequate to handle the increased traffic resulting from new development.

### Ohio Maritime Assistance Program

- Expands the grant eligibility criteria under the Ohio Maritime Assistance Program.

### Rail infrastructure funding

- Appropriates \$6 million, from the Ohio Highway and Transportation Safety Fund, to fund short-line rail development infrastructure projects that enhance capacity and improve safety.

### U.S. Route 23 and I-71 connector

- Modifies the requirement that ODOT and the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission create a joint plan regarding the feasibility of connecting U.S. Route 23 and I-71 that was enacted through H.B. 54 of the 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

### Maintenance and repair agreements

(R.C. 5521.01)

The bill alters a provision of law that states that any written agreement for street maintenance and repairs with a municipal corporation that was entered into by the former Ohio Department of Highways is binding on the Department of Transportation (ODOT). It does so by clarifying that ODOT may not terminate or modify the agreement without the consent of the municipal corporation, unless the agreement stipulates that ODOT may terminate the agreement.

## **Regional transportation improvement projects (RTIP)**

(R.C. 5595.02)

Current law authorizes the boards of county commissioners of two or more counties to enter into a cooperative agreement creating a regional transportation improvement project (RTIP). To administer the cooperative agreement that creates an RTIP, current law requires the creation of a governing board made up of a county commissioner and county engineer from each participating county, or their designees. The bill allows for the expansion of the governing board's membership by authorizing the participation of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the JobsOhio network partner that covers the majority of the area encompassed by the RTIP, or that CEO's designee.

## **Data analysis**

(R.C. 5501.57)

The bill requires ODOT to collect and analyze data regarding building permits that have been issued for residential and commercial developments constructed after the bill's effective date. ODOT must collect and analyze the data to assess whether ODOT's existing transportation facilities impacted by the new developments are adequate to properly handle any increased traffic resulting from the area's anticipated growth. ODOT must use the data in its general transportation construction planning.

## **Ohio Maritime Assistance Program**

(R.C. 5501.91)

The bill expands the grant eligibility criteria under the Ohio Maritime Assistance Program by doing both of the following:

- Allowing a port authority to apply for a grant without owning an active marine cargo terminal, provided the port authority is a co-applicant with an owner of such a terminal; and
- Allowing an applicant active marine cargo terminal to be located on an Ohio River tributary.

Under current law, the grants under the program are only available to a port authority that owns an active marine cargo terminal on the shore of Lake Erie, the shore of the Ohio River, or on a Lake Erie tributary or the port authority is located in (or has jurisdiction within) a federally qualified opportunity zone with an active marine cargo terminal with a stevedoring operation located on the shore of Lake Erie or the Ohio River.

## **Rail infrastructure funding**

(R.C. 5747.502; Sections 411.10 and 411.20)

The bill appropriates \$6 million for ODOT, in conjunction with the Ohio Rail Commission, to identify and fund short-line rail development infrastructure projects that enhance capacity and improve safety. The funds are transferred from the Ohio Highway and Transportation Safety

Fund (Fund 5X10), which consists of Local Government Fund (LGF) money withheld from local governments that collect traffic camera fines.

## **U.S. Route 23 and I-71 connector**

(Sections 610.20 and 610.21)

The bill modifies the requirement, enacted earlier in 2025, that ODOT and the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC) create a joint plan regarding the feasibility of connecting U.S. Route 23 and I-71. The modifications to the plan include all the following:

- Splitting the plan into two components, an interim report and a final joint plan;
- Specifying that the interim report must conceptually identify and evaluate the corridor alternatives and alignments;
- Authorizing ODOT and OTIC to consider alignments that were not part of the original specific list;
- Making the interim report due October 1, 2025, rather than the full plan due by September 30, 2025;
- Requiring the final joint plan to identify a preferred route for the connecting corridor, include all preliminary engineering assessments (design, cost estimates, right-of-way, and environmental impacts, etc.), and recommend whether final implementation should be through ODOT or OTIC; and
- Extending the deadline for the final joint plan to October 1, 2026.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> For more information about the joint plan, see the end of page 22 of the LSC [Final Analysis for H.B. 54 \(PDF\)](#), which is available on the General Assembly's website: [legislature.ohio.gov](http://legislature.ohio.gov).