



## STATE TRANSPORTATION BUDGET EDITORIAL

Supporters of public transportation spoke, and the Ohio legislature listened. A new transportation budget investing \$8.3 billion over the next 2 years was approved with bipartisan support in both the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate. The bill allocates \$70 million in public transit funding.

Governor Mike DeWine's budget as introduced in early February slashed funding for public transit by nearly 90%. Through extraordinary advocacy efforts of public transit agencies, their partners, and other stakeholders, funding was ultimately increased by the legislature. On March 31, DeWine signed the transportation budget without exercising his line-item veto authority. Absent proper funding, the future of public transportation in Ohio would be an uncertain one. METRO, PARTA, and SARTA CEOs Dawn Distler, Claudia Amrhein, and Kirt Conrad joined others in testifying to the Ohio House of Representatives Finance Committee and The Ohio Senate Transportation Committee in support of increased funding on behalf of statewide transit systems and the individuals they serve.

A key point stressed in testimony was the essential nature of public transit. It is a lifeline for many Ohioans, particularly the elderly and disabled. Ohio's public transit systems provide millions of trips every year which allow the most vulnerable individuals in our communities to enjoy the freedom of mobility many others take for granted.

METRO, PARTA, and SARTA are thankful to the legislature for recognizing the importance of investment in transportation. Approval of House Bill 74, and its \$70 million allocation for public transit, allows thousands of Ohioans to continue making life-necessary trips. It also provides transit workers with job security and the ability to continue providing robust and efficient services for communities. It's undeniable: Ohio needs transit!

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