



Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Monthly Legislative Update

March 2021



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

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What's Happening

House Passes Transportation Budget, Now With Senate

On Thursday, March 4th the Ohio House of Representatives sent the transportation budget on to Senate by a vote of 87-8.

House Bill 74 provides \$7 billion over the next two fiscal years for the Ohio Department of Transportation to support infrastructure, highway, road and bridge construction and maintenance as well as public transportation, intermodal and more, including \$100 million for major new road construction projects. It will also provide \$1 billion to the Ohio Department of Public Safety, including additional funding to the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Rep. Rick Carfagna, (R-Westerville) said the bill does improve transit funding by doubling what Governor Mike DeWine included in his executive budget, emphasizing bipartisan interest to increase funding for public transportation. The House earmarks \$33 million in each fiscal year to support public transportation statewide through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) flexible funding program.

Additionally, the House added a provision that earmarks \$2.6 million in each fiscal year for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) to oversee rural transportation planning grant programs.

While Governor DeWine included language in the executive budget to codify his "Hands Free Ohio" proposal that broadens the existing texting-while-driving prohibition to more generally prohibit using an electronic wireless communications device while driving, the House removed these provisions from the bill during the committee process.

House Bill 74 is now pending in the Senate Transportation Committee chaired by Senator Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard), with two hearings on the bill this week. The bill is expected to be enacted by the end of March.

House Gives Final Approval to \$1.9T COVID Aid Plan

The House on Wednesday approved a \$1.9 trillion relief package for the pandemic-ravaged economy, delivering President Joe Biden's first legislative achievement after a frenzied eight-week sprint in Congress. Biden is expected to sign the bill on Friday, aiming to prevent millions of Americans from losing boosted unemployment benefits that are set to expire over the weekend.



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Top News

FY22-23 Budget

A casualty in the state transportation budget sub bill is the governor's touted distracted driver provisions. Other major changes include the removal of all fee increases targeted for funding for the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Instead, the proposal provides an additional \$35 million per year in General Revenue Funds (GRF) "solely for highway patrol operating costs." In addition, sub HB74 doubles the proposed funding for public transportation, House Finance Committee Chair Scott Oelslager (D-North Canton) said, "taking it to \$193.7 million over the next two years, specifically \$46.3 million GRF, \$66 million flex funds and \$81.4 million in FTA funding over the biennium."

The House sent the transportation budget on to Senate. Rep. Scott Oelslager (R-North Canton), the sponsor of transportation budget HB74 and chair of the House Finance Committee, said the bill will provide \$7 billion over the next two fiscal years for the Ohio Department of Transportation to support infrastructure, highway, road and bridge construction and maintenance as well as public transportation, intermodal and more, including \$100 million for major new road construction projects. It will also provide \$1 billion to the Ohio Department of Public Safety, including an additional \$15 million/year for the Ohio State Highway Patrol. This brings the total General Revenue Fund appropriation for the patrol to \$50 million/year.

Business/Corporate

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce released its public policy priorities for the 134th General Assembly, saying they "build on recent, pro-growth policy successes that have resulted in Ohio now being recognized nationally as among the 10 best states for businesses" while also seeking more action to help address economic effects of the pandemic. In addition to advancing policies that make the state "more business-friendly and competitive," the Ohio Chamber has also partnered to support the U.S. Chamber's "Equality of Opportunity Agenda." As a result, the chamber's list of priorities includes recommendations on race-based opportunity gaps.

Census

The U.S. Census Bureau announced that it will not be releasing redistricting data, which is used to draw new congressional lines, until Sept. 30, citing delays due to COVID-19. The bureau had originally planned to deliver the data to states by March 31. The bureau said that it will also release the data for all states all at once, a procedure different from previous years when the data was released on a flow basis. The change was made "because of COVID-19 related shifts in data collection and in the data processing schedule ... enables the Census Bureau to deliver complete and accurate redistricting data in a more timely fashion overall for the states."

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced he has filed a federal lawsuit to compel the U.S. Census Bureau to release population data relevant to the upcoming redistricting process. The lawsuit comes after the Census Bureau announced that the data would not be sent to the states until Sept. 30, citing delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The bureau had originally planned to deliver the data to the states by March 31.

Coronavirus

The state's coronavirus curfew has been completely lifted after Ohio saw fewer than 2,500 hospitalizations for seven straight days, Gov. Mike DeWine announced during his briefing. The curfew was initially moved back to 11 p.m. after the state experienced seven straight days with coronavirus-related hospitalizations below 3,500. Within that two-week period, the state's hospitalizations dropped quickly enough to completely avoid the potential midnight curfew, which would have been in place if hospitalizations were under 3,000 for seven straight days, but higher than 2,500.

The rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths in Ohio's nursing homes "skyrocketed" in the last three months of 2020, according to AARP Ohio. "The latest release of AARP's Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard depicts a worsening crisis from coast to coast, including Ohio," the organization said. In the four-week period ending Dec. 20, more than 72 percent of nursing homes in the state reported residents with confirmed cases of coronavirus. More than 94 percent of nursing homes reported at least one staff member diagnosed with the virus.

Top News

The Ohio Department of Health said it is adding about 4,000 deaths to the count of COVID deaths, vastly increasing a number that stood at 11,856. Process issues affecting the reconciliation and reporting of these deaths began in October, ODH said, adding that it is had been working with Auditor Keith Faber's office on an audit of COVID-19 data since September.

Ohio's centralized scheduling system for COVID-19 vaccination appointments is "functional and ready from a technical standpoint" but needs a "critical mass" of providers to sign up before the state will launch it for public use, Gov. Mike DeWine said Tuesday.

All of the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) coronavirus-related public health orders will be removed when the state begins to see 50 cases per 100,000 population for two weeks, Gov. Mike DeWine announced during a statewide address. "I am often asked, 'Mike, when is this going to end? When can we lift the health orders?' I've consulted Dr. Vanderhoff, our department of health's medical director, and a number of epidemiologists as well as other health experts, and they tell me that now, with the vaccine, we can set realistic goals," DeWine said, indicating the goal of 50 cases per 100,000 population is reasonable.

Vaccination eligibility expanded to two new sets of groups effective Thursday, March 4, according to an announcement from Gov. Mike DeWine. Phase 1C includes those with certain medical conditions or in several professions, while Phase 2 includes all those ages 60 to 64. In total, he said there are around 246,000 eligible Ohioans in Phase 1C and 695,000 in Phase 2.

Three weeks after Ohio Department of Health (ODH) officials realized they failed to report more than 4,000 COVID-19 deaths from late 2020, ODH Director Stephanie McCloud said the agency will no longer sacrifice accuracy for speed when releasing mortality data. ODH had been reporting Ohio Disease Reporting System (ODRS) mortality data daily, reconciling that information with verified death certificate data from the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS), she said. Going forward, ODH will use death certificate data from EDRS as the sole source of information for deaths reported on the state's COVID-19 dashboards.

Economic Development

Ohio's third planned "innovation district" was announced by Gov. Mike DeWine, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted and Central Ohio leaders, following similar announcements for Cleveland in January and Cincinnati in March 2020. It is expected to create 20,000 jobs and \$3 billion in economic impact in the next decade. JobsOhio, Ohio State University (OSU) and Nationwide Children's Hospital are working together on the project, with the university investing \$650 million alongside \$350 million from the hospital and \$100 million from the private economic development organization. The \$1.1 billion in initial investment is expected to generate another \$2 billion in private development, including housing for the new workers.

Employment/Unemployment

The U.S. unemployment rate fell by 0.4 percentage points to 6.3 percent in January, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Non-farm payroll employment increased slightly as the American economy added 49,000 jobs, BLS said.

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), if the December employment rebound after the initial COVID-19 disruptions continues throughout 2021 in a similar magnitude, total employment is predicted to increase at an annual rate of 1.92 percent for the next six months in Ohio.

Elections 2022

U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-Columbus) became the latest officeholder to say she will not run for the U.S. Senate in 2022.

Top News

Energy + Utilities

Another defendant in the federal corruption case targeting former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) pleaded guilty. Jeff Longstreth, a Householder adviser who has already pleaded guilty to charges related to the alleged multi-million-dollar scheme to bring Householder to power and win passage of nuclear subsidy law 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), also entered a guilty plea in his role as head of Generation Now, a 501(c)(4) organization allegedly involved in the scheme. Energy subsidy legislation 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) faced its first successful repeal effort as the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee moved to kill FirstEnergy profit guarantees with unanimous passage of SB10 (Romanchuk). Sen. Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) and Democrats failed to expand the bill to reverse legacy coal subsidies and restore renewable standards, among other key provisions of HB6.

Legislation was introduced to repeal the nuclear and solar energy subsidies created by scandal-tainted 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), Reps. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) and Dick Stein (R-Norwalk) said. The House Public Utilities Committee, which Hoops chairs, informally heard sponsor testimony on HB128 (Hoops-Stein) Wednesday, Feb. 17.

The General Assembly is a step closer to repealing at least a portion of scandal-tainted energy subsidy law 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) following Senate passage of SB10 (Romanchuk). The upper chamber voted 33-0 to pass the bill, which eliminates the “decoupling” mechanism created in HB6.

State lawmakers are mounting another run at windmill referendum legislation that would allow local voters to veto turbine projects approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB). Lead co-sponsors on wind referendum 133-HB401 (Reineke) from the previous General Assembly, Reps. Craig Riedel (R-Defiance) and Dick Stein (R-Norwalk), are returning this year with a bill to grant home rule petition power over wind farm applications.

The Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) has spent close to \$400,000 so far in preparing for and administering the duties it gained under controversial energy subsidy legislation 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) and was anticipating about \$300,000 in ongoing annual expenses related to it, the agency’s chief told lawmakers in a budget hearing. Christina O’Keeffe, executive director of OAQDA, told members of the House Finance Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources Subcommittee that the executive budget proposal for her agency does not include any revenue related to HB6 functions. “The authority continues to work with the administration and legislative leaders to identify an appropriate source as the future of the program continues to be discussed,” she said.

“I’m trying to figure out what’s still left in HB6.” Rep. Laura Lanese (R-Grove City) asked the question confronting many on Capitol Square with the swirl of legislation to repeal various provisions of the controversial House bill. They include Senate passage of SB10 (Romanchuk) to revoke FirstEnergy’s “decoupled” profit guarantees and “significantly excessive earnings” — the latter in budget bill 133-HB166 (Oelslager) — and the pending repeal of nuclear subsidies forecasted by Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) in SB44 (Rulli-Cirino). Lanese and Reps. Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood) and Michael O’Brien (D-Warren) addressed the House Public Utilities Committee on the reintroduction of “clean” repeal legislation from the 133rd General Assembly. House Public Utilities Chairman Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) and Rep. Dick Stein (R-Norwalk) also presented joint sponsor testimony on HB128, which would reverse nuclear and solar subsidies, decoupling guarantees, OVEC language, and FirstEnergy’s exemption from the significantly excessive earnings test (SEET) — also granting customer refunds of collected charges — but would not restore RPS mandates.

Ohio now has 35 solar farms in some stage of approval or construction, including the 274-megawatt (MW) Yellowbud project 35 miles south of Columbus cleared by the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) Thursday. Yellowbud Solar’s 2,040 acre project will occupy parts of Deerfield, Union, Deer Creek and Wayne townships in northwest Ross County and south Pickaway County west of Circleville.

Gov. Mike DeWine reappointed Dennis Deters to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), and also received a second list of nominees for former Chairman Sam Randazzo’s seat after rejecting the first batch. New candidates include former Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Jenifer French; Office of the Ohio Consumers’ Counsel (OCC) Analytical

Top News

Department Director Daniel Shields of Westerville (Independent); Marathon Petroleum Refining Sustainability Manager Virginia King of Perrysburg (Republican); and Environmental Review Appeals Commission (ERAC) Chairwoman Melissa Shilling of Johnstown (Republican).

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) opened a larger conversation this week on Senate President Matt Huffman's (R-Lima) Governing Board presentation in view of the General Assembly's reexamination of state utility policy enacted in pre-"fracking" energy omnibus 127-SB221 and amended in energy subsidy bill 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin). The guilt of a dark-money group connected to former House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) is now complete. U.S. District Judge Timothy Black has delayed sentencing of the 501(c)4 Generation Now as additional racketeer-influenced corrupt organization (RICO) charges proceed against the former speaker but still sitting House member and several Statehouse lobbyists, but Black entered a plea deal and \$1.5 million forfeiture negotiated by the U.S. Attorney's Office and signed by Generation Now President Jeffrey Longstreth.

Senate President Matt Huffman's (R-Lima) divide-and-conquer strategy to upend various provisions of 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) by isolating no votes with "piecemeal" legislation made its second move in committee passage of SB44's (Rulli-Cirino) repealed nuclear bailout. The Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee made short work of the bill despite a long list of tabled Democrat amendments to revoke other portions of 133-HB6, refund all utility charges declared unlawful by the Ohio Supreme Court, and require at least one member of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to represent consumer interests, among other proposed changes.

The Senate voted unanimously to repeal the nuclear generation subsidies of 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin), continuing the chamber's strategy of unraveling the controversial energy law piece by piece. Sen. Michael Rulli (R-Salem), speaking about his SB44 (Rulli-Cirino), said Energy Harbor, operator of Ohio's two nuclear power stations, is likely in a better financial position after exiting bankruptcy, and energy policies "brewing" in Washington, D.C. appear to be more favorable to nuclear plants.

The end of mandated energy efficiency (EE) programs created by the recession-era 127-SB221 and rescinded by energy subsidy bill 133-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) is not the final word on electric savings after all. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) is preparing to launch a series of stakeholder talks on the future of energy efficiency and peak demand reduction (PDR) programs that shift consumption to overnight hours through an "Internet of Things" (IOT) including smart thermostats and appliances. PUCO closed the books on energy omnibus 127-SB221's 13-year-old EE and PDR requirements on electric distribution utilities (EDU). Embattled 133-HB6 allows those programs to sunset when Ohio's four EDUs — American Electric Power (AEP) of Ohio, FirstEnergy, Duke Energy Ohio and Dayton Power & Light (DP&L) — reached a cumulative average of 17.5 percent energy savings or Dec. 31, 2020 at the latest. Commissioners said last week that AEP, FirstEnergy, Duke and DP&L had managed 19.8 percent energy efficiency by the end of 2020.

Federal

U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-OH) said recently that she has been again named chair of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I).

General Assembly/Statehouse

The Senate passed SB8 (McColley), regarding broadband service expansion; SB2 (Gavarone), regarding competency evaluations and mental health treatment in criminal cases and proposing to enter Ohio into the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact; SB11 (Brenner), designating Feb. 7-14 as "Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week;" SB18 (Roegner-Schaffer), tax conformity legislation; and SCR3 (Hottinger), to adopt the legislative code of ethics.

Rep. Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati) presented two bills to the House Government Oversight Committee that would allow for virtual testimony (HB55) and require members to wear masks (HB56), telling the committee repeatedly through testimony and questioning on both bills that if the majority doesn't want to have one, they need to allow for the other. Kelly said she

Top News

would be fine to have both bills put into House rules instead of the Ohio Revised Code, but introduced them as bills to have a better debate after Republicans voted down previous measures.

Reps. Thomas West (D-Canton) and Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson) announced new legislation that they said would address and seek to discourage false and racially motivated 9-1-1 calls. West said in a press conference that the two lawmakers have been working on the bill since last session and felt it was important to bring it forward this General Assembly.

Sen. Cecil Thomas (D-Cincinnati) resigned as the No. 2 in minority caucus leadership in light of his formal entry into the campaign for mayor of Cincinnati. At session, the chamber voted to move Minority Whip Nickie Antonio (D-Lakewood) up to the role of assistant minority leader and Assistant Minority Whip Tina Maharath (D-Canal Winchester) up to the role of whip. Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus) was elected to join the Senate Democratic leadership team as the new assistant whip. In addition to passing a proposal to repeal nuclear subsidies via SB44 (Rulli-Cirino), the Senate voted to approve SB36 (Manning-S. Huffman), regarding victim compensation programs; SB21 (Antonio-Manning), regarding stroke treatment protocols; and SB42 (Schaffer), designating the second week of November as "Ohio Diabetes Awareness-Heart Connection Week."

Governor

LeeAnne Cornyn, director of children's initiatives for Gov. Mike DeWine's office, will become director of cabinet affairs, DeWine announced. Kristi Burre, head of the Office of Children Services Transformation, will replace Cornyn as head of children's initiatives. Both staffing changes were prompted by the departure of Ryan Burgess, previously director of cabinet affairs, to become CEO of Goodwill Columbus.

Local Government

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio released its legislative platform for the 134th General Assembly, focusing on three key areas: revenue stability and fulfillment of state funding responsibilities; a greater role for counties in economic development; and preserving the sales tax base.

People

Grove City Mayor Richard L. "Ike" Stage has been elected to the board of directors of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), according to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). Stage's election to NARC will give him a leading role in the organization and its advocacy efforts on behalf of regional councils throughout the United States, MORPC said.

The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus announced that Amy Klaben will receive its 2021 Democracy In Action award, which is the league's highest honor and is awarded in recognition for outstanding participation in civic affairs. According to the league, Klaben has spent her career addressing the lack of affordable housing in Central Ohio. For 16 years she was the CEO of Homeport; then in 2017 she started the Move to Prosper program, which makes affordable rental housing in high opportunity areas available to low-income, single parent households.

Telecommunications

To illustrate the problems with broadband access in Ohio, Rep. Rick Carfagna (R-Westerville) told the House Finance Committee of a public library in Athens County where 50 percent of its WiFi usage comes when the library is closed. "Just think about that for a moment. There are people literally sitting in their cars in the parking lot, after hours, with kids doing schoolwork, or people doing job searches, applying for work, or doing basic online banking," he said. Carfagna called the introduction of broadband expansion legislation HB2 (Carfagna-Stewart) a "labor of love" from his time in the cable industry and as a township trustee. The bill is a reintroduction of 133-HB13 (Carfagna-O'Brien), which passed the House but did not clear the Senate before the end of session last year.

Top News

The House approved a major broadband service expansion measure with an overwhelming majority, matching Senate action last week but with a much larger appropriation attached to the House version. The chamber voted 88-5 to approve HB2 (Carfagna-Stewart), and 88-8 to attach an emergency clause that will put it into immediate effect upon the governor's signature. Joint sponsor Rep. Rick Carfagna (R-Westerville) said that will allow the Development Services Agency (DSA) to get a faster start on drafting rules for the program. The House measure carries a \$210 million appropriation, with \$20 million for this fiscal year, \$170 million for FY22 and \$20 million for FY23, while the Senate version provides \$20 million for FY22, with an option to carry unspent funds into FY23. Gov. Mike DeWine's executive budget proposes \$290 million for broadband expansion efforts.

Transportation/Infrastructure

Despite having a long list of witnesses on the proposed transportation budget, HB74 (Oelslager), the House Finance Committee heard only from Ohio Trucking Association (OTA) President and CEO Tom Balzer at its hearing. Balzer laid out the OTA's five priority areas for the budget: passage of the governor's distracted driving initiative "Hands-Free Ohio"; revision of the registration system for commercial trailers; expansion of truck parking; hiking weight limits for personal delivery devices; and restoring financial assistance for truck driver training.

The Ohio Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave Ohio's infrastructure a slightly better grade than the national average in its first report in more than a decade, but the group said the Buckeye State needs to take more action to improve its overall grade of "C-". Ohio's grade was higher than the national average of "D+" but saw low grades among the 16 rated categories in areas such as levees, roads, and transit.

Dean Ringle, executive director of the County Engineers Association of Ohio (CEAO), gave a presentation on county engineers' duties and the association's legislative priorities to the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee. Those include preparing construction plans, specifications and estimates for improvements to all county roads; advising townships on road improvements and maintenance; inspecting and maintaining bridges; and overseeing new commercial and residential construction projects in unincorporated areas for conformance to public street construction standards as well as grading and erosion control requirements.

Utilities

Ohio's largest government aggregation of energy users is redoubling the call for a "consumer-friendly" appointment to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) following the resignation of former FirstEnergy consultant Sam Randazzo and the federal raid of his Columbus home. The Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) sent Gov. Mike DeWine a letter this week ahead of Thursday's application deadline on a second round of applicants for Randazzo's commission seat. The chairmanship, which the former energy lobbyist held, is a separate decision of the governor.

Legislative Updates

Goal 1: Promote regionalism at the local, state, and federal levels of government fostering economic growth, prosperity, efficient use of resources, and a high quality of life for Central Ohio residents.

- HB43** PUBLIC BODIES - ELECTRONIC MEETINGS (SOBECKI L, HOOPS J) To authorize public bodies to meet via teleconference and video conference.
Current Status: 2/11/2021 - House Government Oversight, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-43>
- HB66** REVIEW PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS (HOOPS J) To require the reporting of information on and legislative review of property tax exemptions.
Current Status: 3/3/2021 - PASSED BY HOUSE; Vote 98-0
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-66>
- HB71** EXEMPT CERTAIN HOUSING FROM PROPERTY TAXATION (PLUMMER P, HICKS-HUDSON P) To exempt from property taxation qualifying housing for individuals diagnosed with mental illness or substance use disorder and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 2/23/2021 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-71>
- HB110** OPERATING BUDGET (OELSLAGER S) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2023, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.
Current Status: 3/11/2021 - House Finance, (Seventh Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-110>
- HB143** REGARDS THE CLEAN OHIO PROGRAM (HILLYER B) Relating to the Clean Ohio Program and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-143>
- HB177** ALLOW GOVERNMENTS TO USE BLOCKCHAIN (CARFAGNA R, FRAIZER M) To allow a governmental entity to utilize distributed ledger technology, including blockchain technology.
Current Status: 3/4/2021 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-177>
- SB20** COUNTY UTILITY SUPPLY CONTRACTS (HACKETT R) To exempt county utility supply contracts entered into under a joint purchasing program from the 10-year maximum period for such contracts and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 3/9/2021 - Senate Local Government and Elections, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-20>
- SB45** TAX INDUCEMENTS CERTAIN BUSINESSES (PETERSON B, KUNZE S) To enhance state and local tax inducements for businesses making substantial fixed asset and employment investments and their suppliers.
Current Status: 2/23/2021 - Senate Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-45>

Legislative Updates

SB105 MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (SYKES V, SCHURING K) To require political subdivisions to recognize state certifications of minority business enterprises.
Current Status: 3/3/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-105>

Legislative Updates

Goal 2: Achieve an advanced, inclusive, and exceptional transportation system that connects Central Ohio's people and products to the world.

- HB27** INCREASE PENALTY FOR FAILING TO SECURE VEHICLE LOAD (PATTON T) To increase the criminal penalties associated with failing to secure a load on a vehicle.
Current Status: 2/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House Criminal Justice
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-27>
- HB47** ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATION GRANT REBATE (LOYCHIK M) To require the Director of Transportation to establish an electric vehicle charging station grant rebate program and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 3/2/2021 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-47>
- HB70** REVISE LAW FOR PASSING SCHOOL BUS (BROWN R) To make changes to the law governing passing a school bus.
Current Status: 2/10/2021 - Referred to Committee House Criminal Justice
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-70>
- HB74** ENACT FY22-23 TRANSPORTATION BUDGET (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2023, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs.
Current Status: 3/10/2021 - Senate Transportation, (Fifth Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-74>
- HB111** ALTER USE OF CELLPHONES WHILE DRIVING LAWS (LIGHTBODY M) To alter the law governing the use of a handheld electronic wireless communications device while driving.
Current Status: 2/17/2021 - Referred to Committee House Transportation and Public Safety
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-111>
- HB141** MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS (SKINDELL M, UPCHURCH T) To make appropriations related to public transportation.
Current Status: 2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-141>
- SB23** ILLEGALLY PASSING SCHOOL BUS (GAVARONE T) To impose a civil penalty when a driver who illegally passes a school bus cannot be identified, to designate the month of August as "School Bus Safety Awareness Month," and to designate this act as the School Bus Safety Act.
Current Status: 2/23/2021 - BILL AMENDED, Senate Veterans and Public Safety, (Third Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-23>
- SB32** ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION (RULLI M) To require the Director of Transportation to establish an electric vehicle charging station grant rebate program and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 2/17/2021 - Senate Transportation, (First Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-32>

Legislative Updates

Goal 3: Pursue sustainability solutions that protect and conserve our natural resources and promote a diverse supply of clean, affordable, and reliable sources of energy for our growing region.

HB6 MODIFY LAWS GOVERNING CERTAIN PROFESSIONS DUE TO COVID-19 (ROEMER B) To amend Section 30 of H.B. 197 of the 133rd General Assembly to modify the laws governing certain health professionals and educator preparation programs due to COVID-19 and other circumstances and to modify the electric utility laws regarding energy efficiency programs; to amend the version of section 4729.92 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect on October 9, 2021, to continue the changes to that section on and after that date; and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 3/3/2021 - PASSED BY HOUSE; Vote 96-2, Emergency Clause 89-5

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-6>

HB10 REPEAL HB6 - REVISE ELECTRIC UTILITY SERVICE LAW (LELAND D) To repeal Section 5 of H.B. 6 of the 133rd General Assembly to make changes regarding electric utility service law, to allow the implementation of energy waste reduction programs, and to repeal certain provisions of H.B. 6 of the 133rd General Assembly.

Current Status: 2/17/2021 - House Public Utilities, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-10>

HB18 REPEAL HB6 (LANESE L) Repeal HB 6 of the 133rd GA

Current Status: 2/17/2021 - House Public Utilities, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-18>

HB57 REPEAL HB6 ENERGY LAWS (SKINDELL M, O'BRIEN M) To repeal the changes made by H.B. 6 of the 133rd General Assembly to the laws governing electric service, renewable energy, and energy efficiency and the changes made to other related laws.

Current Status: 2/17/2021 - House Public Utilities, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-57>

HB128 REPEAL HB6 (HOOPS J, STEIN D) To make changes regarding electric utility service law, to repeal certain provisions of H.B. 6 of the 133rd General Assembly, and to provide refunds to retail electric customers in the state.

Current Status: 3/9/2021 - House Public Utilities, (Third Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-128>

SB19 WETLAND MITIGATION-PROPERTY TAX (SCHAFFER T) To establish a property tax exemption for certain property used for wetland mitigation projects.

Current Status: 3/10/2021 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-19>

SB29 ELIMINATE AUTO ENROLLMENT-UTILITY AGGREGATION (HOAGLAND F) To eliminate automatic enrollment in governmental electric and natural gas aggregation programs.

Current Status: 2/23/2021 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-29>

Legislative Updates

- SB44** REVISE HB6 FROM 133RD G.A. (RULLI M, CIRINO J) To repeal the nuclear resource credit payment provisions, and amend, and rename as solar resource, the renewable resource credit payment provisions of H.B. 6 of the 133rd General Assembly.
Current Status: 3/3/2021 - PASSED BY SENATE; Vote 32-0
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-44>
- SB52** WIND TURBINE SETBACKS (REINEKE W, MCCOLLEY R) To require inclusion of safety specifications in wind farm certificate applications, to modify wind turbine setbacks, and to permit a township referendum vote on certain wind farm and solar facility certificates.
Current Status: 3/9/2021 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-52>
- SB89** RENEWABLE ENERGY (DOLAN M) To extend the renewable portfolio standard, increase solar energy benchmarks, and extend the property tax exemption for qualified energy projects that use renewable energy resources.
Current Status: 3/3/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Energy and Public Utilities
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-89>
- SB95** REGULATE UTILITY RESELLERS (MAHARATH T) To require refunds to utility customers who have been improperly charged and to regulate certain resellers of utility service.
Current Status: 3/3/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Energy and Public Utilities
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-95>
- SB96** PREVENT UTILITY DISRUPTION-COVID (WILLIAMS S) To prevent the disruption of utility service during the state of emergency declared regarding COVID-19 and to declare an emergency.
Current Status: 3/3/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Energy and Public Utilities
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-96>

Legislative Updates

Goal 4: Promote effective data policies and the equitable deployment of digital infrastructure that benefit Central Ohio communities.

- HB2** REGARDS BROADBAND EXPANSION (CARFAGNA R, STEWART B) Regarding broadband expansion, including access to electric cooperative easements and facilities, and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 3/9/2021 - Senate Financial Institutions and Technology, (Second Hearing)
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-2>
- SB8** BROADBAND-ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EASEMENTS (MCCOLLEY R) Regarding broadband expansion, including access to electric cooperative easements and facilities, and to make an appropriation.
Current Status: 2/17/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-8>

Legislative Updates

Goal 5: Raise awareness of racial and social justice issues and work to continually improve communities within our growing region.

- HB72** DESIGNATE HISPANIC, LATINX HERITAGE MONTH (MIRANDA J, CUTRONA A) To designate September 15 to October 15 each year as “Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month.”
Current Status: 2/10/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-72>
- SB78** JUNETEENTH-LEGAL HOLIDAY (CRAIG H, BRENNER A) To establish the nineteenth of June as Juneteenth, a legal holiday for which government employees receive paid leave.
Current Status: 2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Government Oversight and Reform
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-78>
- SCR4** DECLARE RACISM PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS (CRAIG H, WILLIAMS S) To declare racism a public health crisis and to ask the Governor to establish a working group to promote racial equity in Ohio.
Current Status: 2/24/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Health
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SCR-4>
- SR11** RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2021 AS NATIONAL SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH. (FEDOR T, KUNZE S) Recognizing January 2021 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.
Current Status: 2/2/2021 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SR-11>

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