**Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts
*Legislative Report – March 2023***

**GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.
RH RESOURCES**

**State Transportation Budget – F.Y. 2024-2025**

The State Transportation Budget for F.Y. 2024-2025 ([HB 23](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/135/hb23)) was signed by Governor Mike DeWine on Friday, March 31, 2023. The $13.5 billion budget bill, which will take effect July 1, received no line-item vetoes from Gov. DeWine before his signature. Before making it to the governor’s desk, the bill’s Conference Committee report was adopted by both the Ohio House (93-2) & Senate (30-1) on March 29. The final version of the bill emerged the day before its adoption after the first and only conference committee meeting. Several changes were made to the budget, including the first substantive boost in two decades to the monetary threshold at which local governments are forced to bid out transportation projects. The so-called "force account limit" language was one of the main sticking points between the two chambers. The Senate removed House language, which members acknowledged was not finalized, that would have replaced the monetary force account limits with a scope-of-work determination. Members of the Senate instead inserted language to allow local governments to establish their own limits, and also established statutory default force account limits - increased from the caps in current law - for each local government to apply if the governing body did not establish its own thresholds. The final agreement between the chambers increased the monetary threshold by 133% and increased those limits annually based on the Department of Transportation's construction cost index, with a 5% cap. House Finance Chair Rep. Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville) said the bill’s final language is a compromise between local government groups and contractors.

Another major point of contention between the two chambers was a House-added $1 billion fund aimed at rural highway projects. Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) had previously expressed reservations about using General Revenue Funds for such a purpose in the transportation budget. While the final version of the bill did not include any House language on the issue, Rep. Edwards said lawmakers will instead seek to address the issue in the state's two-year operating budget (HB 33).

Among other things, the bill increases funding to municipalities statewide by $71.2 million in Fiscal Year 2024 and $72.4 million in FY25. It also increases funding to counties by $61.7 million in FY24 and $62.7 million in FY25 and funding to townships by $33.2 million in FY24 and $33.8 million in FY25, according to the [Legislative Service Commission](https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/legislation/135/hb23/cr/files/hb23-appropriation-spreadsheet-as-reported-by-the-committee-of-conference-135th-general-assembly.pdf). There were also several rail safety provisions added in the wake of a train derailment in East Palestine, funding for the long-awaited $3.6 billion Brent Spence Bridge Corridor project in Cincinnati, and language that requires the state to enter into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in order to obtain approval to issue enhanced driver's licenses, enhanced commercial driver's licenses, and enhanced identification cards.

**State Operating Budget – F.Y. 2024-2025**

The State Operating Budget for F.Y. 2024-2025, [HB 33](https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/135/hb33),began formal hearings before the full House Finance Committee in March. The committee has heard a wide range of testimony over multiple meetings; some of which lasted over nine hours. Committee Chair Rep. Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville) commented on the possibility of including priority income tax cut saying, “"It's technically not (in the budget), but I think there's a lot of chatter of us trying to get to either a flat tax in this budget, or to get to a flat tax over the next couple of budgets.” Rep. Edwards said that while the committee and caucuses are still determining what route they will take when it comes to taxes, there is consensus in the committee that more needs to be done regarding Medicaid reimbursement rates. With the legislature heading into a spring break for the first two weeks of April, Rep. Edwards said he feels "great" about the budget timeline. "Hopefully we can get that out of the way here later on this week," Rep. Edwards said of the transportation plan. "Then hopefully, we'll get the budget bill, HB33, over to the Senate by the end of April."

**H2Ohio – March Update**

As part of Governor DeWine’s [H2Ohio initiative](https://h2.ohio.gov/oda-awards-funding-for-h2ohio-two-stage-ditch-program/), the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) is awarding $4.2 million in grants for 12 two-stage ditch projects. On the funding, newly appointed ODA Director Brian Baldridge said, “We are keeping our foot on the gas pedal to reach our nutrient reduction goals. These projects will provide water quality benefits that complement the other best management practices offered through H2Ohio.”

Six county engineers and six Soil and Water Conservation Districts will receive funds to construct or improve two-stage ditches. Recipients will receive up to 100 percent of requested funding for these projects. More than 18,000 acres of watershed will benefit from the 8.4 miles of two-stage ditch projects. Construction of these projects will begin this summer, and all projects must be completed by Fall 2024. The two-stage ditch became the eighth best management practice offered through ODA’s portion of H2Ohio. A two-stage ditch is a conservation practice that modifies the shape of a drainage ditch to create vegetation benches on each side. Two-stage ditches provide benefits such as slowing water flow, reducing maintenance costs, and improving water quality.

**Below is a list of legislation we are tracking on your behalf:**

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| **HB2** | **LEGISLATIVE INTENT-STATE FUNDING** (CUTRONA A, UPCHURCH T) To declare the intent of the General Assembly to direct state funds to projects across the state for economic growth and community development. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/16/2023 - Referred to Committee House Finance |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-2> |
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| **HB17** | **STATE EMPLOYEE TIKTOK BAN** (SCHMIDT J, SWEARINGEN D) To prohibit state officials, employees, and contractors from using TikTok, WeChat, or any other application or service owned by an entity located in China. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/29/2023 - House Technology and Innovation, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-17> |
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| **HB23** | **TRANSPORTATION BUDGET** (EDWARDS J) To make appropriations for programs related to transportation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/29/2023 - Consideration of Conference Committee Report; House Accepts Conference Committee Report, Vote 93-2 |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-23> |
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| **HB31** | **WORKERS' COMPENSATION BUDGET** (EDWARDS J) To amend Section 5 of S.B. 331 of the 133rd General Assembly to rename the Bureau of Workers' Compensation the Department of Workforce Insurance and Safety, to rename other entities who carry out workers' compensation functions in this state, to amend the version of section 3781.10 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect on December 29, 2023, to continue the change on and after that date, and to make appropriations for the Department for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025, to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Department's programs. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/29/2023 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Finance, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-31> |
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| **HB32** | **INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION BUDGET** (EDWARDS J) To make appropriations for the Industrial Commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of Commission programs. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/29/2023 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Finance, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-32> |
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| **HB33** | **FY24-25 OPERATING BUDGET** (EDWARDS J) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025, to levy taxes, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/30/2023 - House Finance, (Sixth Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-33> |
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| **HB41** | **UTILITY BILLING TRANSPARENCY** (SKINDELL M) To enact "The Consumer Utility Billing Transparency Act" requiring the itemization of all riders, taxes, and other costs on certain utility bills. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/16/2023 - Referred to Committee House Public Utilities |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-41> |
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| **HB64** | **EMINENT DOMAIN LAW CHANGES** (KICK D, CREECH R) To modify the law regarding eminent domain. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/14/2023 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-64> |
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| **HB93** | **LIMITATIONS ON RECOVERY, LIEN IMPOSITION** (JOHNSON M, MCCLAIN R) Regarding limitations on recovery and lien imposition by municipalities against property owners of non-owner-occupied properties for unpaid water, sewer, and disposal services rates and charges. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/14/2023 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-93> |
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| **HB94** | **RETIREMENT SERVICE CREDIT** (CLICK G, WILLIS B) Regarding transfers or purchases of certain retirement service credit. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/14/2023 - Referred to Committee House Pensions |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-94> |
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| **HB96** | **INCREASE MINIMUM WAGE** (JARRELLS D, MOHAMED I) To increase the state minimum wage. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/14/2023 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-96> |
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| **HB101** | **VILLAGE DISSOLUTION** (BIRD A, SCHMIDT J) To modify the law regarding village dissolution. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/28/2023 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-101> |
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| **HB105** | **MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX RETURNS EXTENSIONS** (THOMAS J) To modify the law regarding extensions for filing municipal income tax returns and to limit penalties for late filings. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/28/2023 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-105> |
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| **HB106** | **PAY STUB PROTECTION ACT** (JARRELLS D, LIPPS S) To enact the Pay Stub Protection Act requiring employers to provide earnings and deductions statements to each of the employer's employees. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/22/2023 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-106> |
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| **HB115** | **EQUAL PAY ACT** (MIRANDA J, BRENT J) To address wage disparities in public and private employment and to name this act the Ohio Equal Pay Act. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/22/2023 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-115> |
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| **HB116** | **TAXPAYER DEDUCTIONS** (PETERSON B, CLAGGETT T) To allow taxpayers to deduct in a single year the full bonus depreciation and enhanced expensing allowances the taxpayer deducts for federal income tax purposes. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/28/2023 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Ways and Means, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-116> |
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| **HB121** | **REMOTE WORKERS - MODIFIED MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX** (ROBB BLASDEL M, MATHEWS A) To allow businesses with remote workers to use a modified municipal income tax apportionment formula. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/28/2023 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-121> |
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| **HB126** | **TAX EXEMPTION - MILITARY PAY** (MATHEWS A, MILLER A) To expand a municipal income tax exemption for military pay. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/28/2023 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-126> |
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| **HB134** | **REQUIRE NOTICE TO LIENHOLDERS** (DELL'AQUILA R, GALONSKI T) To require notice to lienholders in tax certificate sales. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/28/2023 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HB-134> |
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| **HCR4** | **TRAINS - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** (BIRD A, PLUMMER P) To urge the United States Congress to pass legislation requiring railroad companies and the U.S. Department of Transportation to inform local and state government officials when trains carrying potentially hazardous materials travel through their respective jurisdictions. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/14/2023 - House Government Oversight, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HCR-4> |
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| **HJR1** | **REQUIRE 60 PERCENT VOTE-CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT** (STEWART B) Proposing to amend Sections 1b, 1e, and 1g of Article II and Sections 1 and 3 of Article XVI of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to require a vote of at least 60% of the electors to approve any constitutional amendment and to modify the procedures for an initiative petition proposing a constitutional amendment. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/22/2023 - House Constitutional Resolutions, (First Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HJR-1> |
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| **HR33** | **TRAINS - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** (ROBB BLASDEL M, MCNALLY L) To urge the United States Congress to pass legislation requiring railroad companies to inform local and state government officials when trains carrying potentially hazardous materials travel through their respective jurisdictions. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2023 - **ADOPTED BY HOUSE**; Amended on Floor, Resolution Vote 94-1 |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-HR-33> |
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| **SB3** | **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM** (SCHURING K) To create the Ohio Community Revitalization Program, authorizing nonrefundable income tax credits for undertaking community projects. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 1/17/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-3> |
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| **SB10** | **INTERNAL REVENUE CODE CHANGES** (BLESSING III L) To amend section 5701.11 of the Revised Code and to amend Sections 225.12, 265.10, 265.20, and 701.10 of H.B. 45 of the 134th General Assembly to expressly incorporate changes in the Internal Revenue Code since February 17, 2022, into Ohio law, to make changes to the Emergency Rental Assistance program, to revise an existing earmark, to modify the requirements for a temporary arts economic relief grant program, and to declare an emergency. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/15/2023 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. immediately |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-10> |
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| **SB23** | **PURCHASING AUTHORITY-CONSTRUCTION SERVICES** (LANG G) To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/8/2023 - Senate Government Oversight, (Third Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-23> |
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| **SB47** | **LEAVE USE PROHIBITION-UNION ACTIVITIES** (HUFFMAN S) To prohibit a public employer from providing paid leave or compensation for a public employee to engage in certain union activities. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 2/8/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-47> |
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| **SB85** | **SEWER DISCOUNTED RATE ELIGIBILITY** (INGRAM C) To expand eligibility for county sewer discounted rates or charges. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/21/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Local Government |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-85> |
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| **SB87** | **ELECTIONS-STATE LEGAL HOLIDAY** (SMITH K) To establish the day of each general election as a legal holiday for which government employees receive paid leave. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate General Government |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-87> |
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| **SB88** | **AGGRAVATED MENACING EXPANSION-UTILITIES** (SMITH K, CIRINO J) To expand the offense of aggravated menacing to prohibit threatening a utility worker, cable operator worker, or broadband worker with intent to obstruct the operation of a utility. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Judiciary |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-88> |
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| **SB91** | **PUBLIC FUNDS ABUSE, WASTE** (SCHAFFER T) Regarding fraud, waste, and abuse of public funds. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Government Oversight |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-91> |
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| **SB94** | **STATE TREASURER, JUDICIAL PRACTICES** (BRENNER A, LANDIS A) Regarding the Treasurer of State, recorded instruments, powers of attorney, judgment liens, mortgage subrogation, law enforcement towing laws, and state stock banks, and to make an appropriation. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/29/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Financial Institutions and Technology |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-94> |
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| **SB96** | **LABOR LAW NOTICES-POSTING** (LANG G, WILSON S) To allow employers to post certain labor law notices on the internet. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/29/2023 - Referred to Committee Senate Workforce and Higher Education |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SB-96> |
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| **SJR2** | **CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE-60 PERCENT REQUIREMENT** (MCCOLLEY R, GAVARONE T) Proposing to amend Sections 1b, 1e, and 1g of Article II and Sections 1 and 3 of Article XVI of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to require a vote of at least 60% of the electors to approve any constitutional amendment. |
|   | ***Current Status:*** | 3/29/2023 - Senate General Government, (Second Hearing) |
|   | ***State Bill Page:*** | <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA135-SJR-2> |
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