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| **GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.**  17 SOUTH HIGH STREET – SUITE 245  COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413  PHONE: 614-461-9335  FAX: 614-461-9336  **Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts**  Legislative Activities Report  **May 2021** |

The Ohio House recently passed the two-year state operating budget with bipartisan support (70-27). HB 110 would spend nearly $75 billion in GRF over the biennium. The House addeda 2% across-the-board income tax cut, which House Republicans suggest will save Ohioans approximately $380 million over the biennium. The House also included a massive overhaul of Ohio’s school funding formula. The “Fair School Funding Plan” was developed by now-Speaker Bob Cupp and was passed by the House last session but never gained traction in the Senate. The school funding plan would be phased-in over the next six years. The budget also includes $155 million in COVID-19 relief aid for restaurants, the lodging industry and entertainment venues, and new businesses. Senate President Matt Huffman said that the Senate will likely make changes to the school funding proposal, but that it could retain portions of it. The Senate has already begun hearings on the bill, which must be passed and signed by the governor by July 1st.

The governor initially proposed over $240 million in the budget bill for the H2Ohio program. This funding was cut to $170 million by the House. The Ohio EPA took the biggest hit, being reduced to $10 million per year under the House plan, compared to $46 million per year in the as-introduced version of the bill. The Ohio EPA has been focusing its H2Ohio efforts on replacing lead pipes and failing septic systems. The Senate Finance Committee heard testimony from the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency earlier this month. Chairman Matt Dolan recognized the importance of the H2Ohio program and said Ohio needs to send the message that the H2Ohio program is here to stay despite the current biennium-by-biennium funding strategy. Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Director said during her testimony, “we know the needs of Ohio’s communities for wastewater and drinking water projects are substantial, and we are confident that we can put all of our H2Ohio dollars to work for the benefit of Ohioans.”

Legislation (HB 167) offering $465 million in federal funding for rent and utility assistance, has passed both chambers and awaits the governor’s signature. The funding was made available through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. Eligible rental households that have been disconnected, are in threat of disconnection, or are behind on their water, sewer, trash removal, and home heating and electric can receive payment assistance in arrears and future payments until the program expires. The funding provided in HB 167 is in addition to $100 million approved by the Controlling Board earlier this year for rent and utility assistance. On the House floor Rep. Scott Oelslager (R-Canton), the sponsor of the legislation, said, “we know that many of our fellow Ohioans are struggling right now and are very nervous about whether they’ll have a roof over their head and heat in their home.”

The Ohio Senate passed HB 2, a bill funding broadband expansion throughout the state, with unanimous support. The high-profile legislation is designed to address the problem of last mile connectivity to households where it remains cost-prohibitive for a private provider to extend their service. Prior to passing the bill, the Senate amended the legislation to remove funding for the program in FY 2022 and FY 2023, suggesting that this will be addressed in the main operating budget (HB 110). The Senate version provides $20 million in FY 2021 for the program.

U.S. Rep. Steve Stivers (R-Columbus) announced plans this month to leave his seat to lead the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Stivers, who has served in the U.S. House since 2011, will officially resign on May 16th. Rep. Stivers, who represents the portions of central and southern Ohio that make up Ohio's 15th Congressional District, served as chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee from 2016 to 2018. The open seat will attract the attention of numerous sitting legislators and could lead to changes in the Ohio legislature should a state legislator be selected to fill the seat. So far Senator Bob Peterson (R-Washington Court House), Senator Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard), Rep. Jeff LaRe (R-Violet Township), Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) and Republican Fairfield County Commissioner Jeff Fix announced plans to run for the open position. While a handful of Democrats have expressed interest, none have yet to officially announce their candidacy for the seat. In making his announcement Congressman Stivers said, "…it has been my honor and privilege to serve the people of Ohio's 15th Congressional District. Throughout my career in public service, I've worked to promote policies that drive our economy forward, get folks to work, and put our country's fiscal house in order. That is why I am looking forward to this new opportunity with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, where I can continue my efforts to support free enterprise and economic growth here in Ohio."

Congressman Tim Ryan became the first Democratic contender for the race to succeed U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, who announced earlier this year that he would not be seeking re-election. The 10-term congressman from eastern Ohio announced the kickoff of the “Workers First Tour” in which he said he will learn about the challenges facing workers. The Republican side is a bit more crowded, with four candidates seeking the nomination: former state party chair Jane Timken, former state treasurer Josh Mandel, entrepreneur Bernie Moreno and businessman Mike Gibbons.

Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley announced she will be running for governor in 2022. This marks the second time Mayor Whaley sought the Democratic nomination, previously running in 2018 before dropping out to endorse Richard Cordray. Mayor Whaley said the challenges she has faced in Dayton have prepared her for the position. The announcement drew criticism from Ohio Republican Party Chair Bob Paduchik. “Under Nan Whaley’s failed leadership, Dayton’s violent crime has spiked, poverty has risen to one of the highest levels in the nation, and incompetent infrastructure management left hundreds of thousands of Daytonians without water for days,” he said. “Now, Nan Whaley wants a promotion. Ohioans deserve leaders who serve to better our communities, not build their own political resumes.”

Below is a list of legislation we are tracking during the 134th Ohio General Assembly:

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| **HB13** | **MODIFY THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW** (GRENDELL D, FRAIZER M) To modify the campaign finance law and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/15/2021 - House Government Oversight, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB20** | **PROHIBIT FORECLOSURES, EVICTION DURING COVID-19** (LELAND D, CROSSMAN J) To prohibit foreclosure activity and the eviction of residential and commercial tenants during the state of emergency declared regarding COVID-19, to refer such proceedings caused by the state of emergency to mediation, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2021 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing) |
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| **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) |
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| **HB63** | **AMEND EMINENT DOMAIN LAWS** (CUTRONA A, STOLTZFUS R) To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/2/2021 - House Civil Justice, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB90** | **OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNOR'S AND HEALTH ORDERS** (WIGGAM S, EDWARDS J) To establish legislative oversight of the Governor's executive orders, certain public health orders, and emergency rules, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/24/2021 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB91** | **AUTHORIZE CERTAIN PUBLIC-PRIVATE INITIATIVES** (PATTON T) To authorize certain public entities to enter into public-private initiatives with a private party through a public-private agreement regarding public facilities. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/28/2021 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Infrastructure and Rural Development, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB103** | **REGARDS ADOPTION/DURATION EMERGENCY RULES** (MERRIN D) Regarding the adoption and duration of emergency administrative rules. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing) |
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| **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:*** | 5/6/2021 - Senate Primary and Secondary Education, (Eighth Hearing) |
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| **HB146** | **REGARDS APPLYING PREVAILING WAGE LAW TO PUBLIC PROJECTS** (RIEDEL C, MANCHESTER S) To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/3/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB158** | **PROHIBIT USE OF CERTAIN FIREFIGHTING FOAM FOR TESTING/TRAINING** (BALDRIDGE B) To prohibit the use of class B firefighting foam containing intentionally added PFAS chemicals for testing and training purposes. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/21/2021 - House Commerce and Labor, (Second Hearing) |
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| **HB167** | **PROVIDE RENT, UTILITY ASSISTANCE** (OELSLAGER S) To provide rent and utility assistance and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/28/2021 - **PASSED BY SENATE**; Vote 32-0 |
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| **HB175** | **DEREGULATE CERTAIN EPHEMERAL WATER FEATURES** (HILLYER B) To deregulate certain ephemeral water features under various water pollution control laws. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/4/2021 - House Agriculture and Conservation, (Second Hearing) |
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| **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:*** | 4/14/2021 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Technology and Innovation, (Third Hearing) |
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| **HB202** | **VOID ORDERS REQUIRING FACIAL COVERINGS** (POWELL J) To void the order of the Interim Director of Health requiring the use of facial coverings throughout the state and prohibit the Governor or other administrative department heads from requiring the use of facial coverings without approval by the General Assembly. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/22/2021 - House Government Oversight, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB232** | **OHIO EQUAL PAY ACT** (HOWSE S, MIRANDA J) To enact the Ohio Equal Pay Act to address wage disparities in public and private employment. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/14/2021 - Referred to Committee House Commerce and Labor |
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| **HB245** | **EXPAND ELIGIBILITY - COUNTY SEWER DISCOUNTED RATES** (INGRAM C) To expand eligibility for county sewer discounted rates or charges. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/14/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
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| **HB247** | **REVISE PLUMBING INSPECTION LAW** (WEST T, KELLY B) To amend the law related to plumbing inspections. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/20/2021 - House Health, (First Hearing) |
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| **HB267** | **LIMIT PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JORDAN K) To limit the duration of public health orders and to allow the General Assembly to act via concurrent resolution in response to a public health emergency if the Governor or Department of Health does not. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/22/2021 - Introduced |
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| **HB269** | **REPEAL SB22** (GALONSKI T) To repeal the version of Section 3 of S.B. 22 of the 134th General Assembly scheduled to take effect on June 23, 2021, to repeal the changes made by S.B. 22 of the 134th General Assembly to the laws governing legislative oversight of certain orders and rules issued by the executive branch, including the establishment of the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee, and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/22/2021 - Introduced |
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| **HB275** | **EXPAND POLITICAL SUBDIVISION JOINT PURCHASING AUTHORITY** (LAMPTON B) To expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases for construction services. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/27/2021 - Introduced |
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| **HR19** | **URGE CONGRESS TO CREATE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE BANK** (SOBECKI L, STEPHENS J) To urge the United States Congress to create a National Infrastructure Bank to finance urgently needed infrastructure projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/24/2021 - House Infrastructure and Rural Development, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB9** | **REDUCE REGULATIONS** (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions in their administrative rules. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/16/2021 - Referred to Committee House Government Oversight |
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| **SB15** | **FISCAL OFFICERS-LIABILITY** (WILSON S) To change the circumstances in which certain fiscal officers may be held liable for a loss of public funds. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
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| **SB19** | **WETLAND MITIGATION-PROPERTY TAX** (SCHAFFER T) To establish a property tax exemption for certain property used for wetland mitigation projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/16/2021 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB22** | **LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS** (JOHNSON T, MCCOLLEY R) To establish legislative oversight of orders issued by the executive branch, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - Consideration of Governor's Veto; House Overrides Veto, Vote 62-35 |
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| **SB27** | **AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT-DEFERRED COMPENSATION** (HOTTINGER J) To authorize automatic enrollment of new state government employees in the Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Program. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - House Insurance, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB39** | **COOPER'S LAW - CRIMES & RECORD RETENTION** (SCHAFFER T) To eliminate the 20-year statute of limitation for felonious assault and aggravated assault if the victim is a peace officer, to modify the law regarding records retention schedules developed by counties, municipal corporations, and townships, to modify the penalties for aggravated assault, tampering with evidence, falsification, and falsification in a theft offense, and to name this act Cooper's Law. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/9/2021 - Senate Judiciary, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB56** | **INDEMNITY-DESIGN CONTRACTS** (BLESSING III L) To regulate the use of indemnity provisions in professional design contracts related to public improvements. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/20/2021 - Senate Judiciary, (Second Hearing) |
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| **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 |
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| **SB83** | **BROWNFIELDS** (WILLIAMS S, RULLI M) To require the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to conduct a study to determine where brownfield sites are located in this state and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2021 - Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources, (Second Hearing) |
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| **SB84** | **CLEAN OHIO REVITALIZATION FUND** (WILLIAMS S, RULLI M) To make changes to the law relating to the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/23/2021 - Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources, (Second Hearing) |
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| **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:*** | 3/31/2021 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB96** | **PREVENT UTILITY DISTRUPTION-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:*** | 3/31/2021 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
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| **SB105** | **MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISES** (SYKES V, SCHURING K) To require political subdivisions to recognize state certifications of minority business enterprises. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/5/2021 - Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity, (Third Hearing) |
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| **SB110** | **RENT, UTILITY ASSISTANCE** (O'BRIEN S, WILSON S) To provide rent and utility assistance and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - Referred to Committee House Finance |
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| **SB131** | **LICENSURE RECIPROCITY** (ROEGNER K, MCCOLLEY R) To require an occupational licensing authority to issue a license or government certification to an applicant who holds a license, government certification, or private certification or has satisfactory work experience in another state under certain circumstances and to amend the version of section 3319.22 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect on April 12, 2023, to continue the changes on and after that date. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/17/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Workforce and Higher Education |
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| **SB143** | **ADOPT MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVEL-ALUMINUM** (O'BRIEN S) To require the Director of Environmental Protection to adopt a maximum contaminant level for aluminum in drinking water. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/24/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources |
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| **SB152** | **FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE TASK FORCE** (HOAGLAND F) To establish the Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Task Force in the office of the Attorney General and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/21/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |
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| **SJR2** | **PERMIT BONDS-CLEAN WATER IMPROVEMENTS** (GAVARONE T, YUKO K) Proposing to enact Section 2t of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to permit the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund clean water improvements. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/21/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Finance |