



Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Monthly Legislative Update

SEPTEMBER 2015

Joe Garrity
Public Affairs Coordinator
(614) 233-4127
jgarrity@morpc.org

Bevan Schneck
Public Affairs Coordinator
(614) 233-4130
bschneck@morpc.org

Laura Koprowski
Director of Public + Government Affairs
(614) 233-4126
lkoprowski@morpc.org

Table of Contents

Top Advocacy Items	2
Top News in Ohio	3-4
New Bills Introduced	4-5
MORPC Legislative Tracking	5-6
State + Federal Government Update	6





TOP ADVOCACY ITEMS

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Status</i>
Secure Federal Funding for Regional Projects	<p>Three projects that would improve transportation infrastructure in Central Ohio were submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for consideration in its latest round of funding under the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rickenbacker Intermodal Facility Expansion Project – Columbus Regional Airport Authority in Partnership with Norfolk Southern Railway Company (MORPC provided a letter of support) 2. Rural Ohio Service Efficiency through Transit Technology Advancements (ROSETTA) – Ohio Department of Transportation 3. Marion Intermodal Route 309 Overpass Project – Ohio Department of Transportation <p>Final decisions on project funding are expected in early fall of this year.</p>
Establish MORPC as Top MPO Resource for Ohio Congressional Delegation on Transportation Issues	<p>Congress has returned to Washington for a busy ten-day stint in September. Later this fall, they will need to decide whether to develop a long-term surface transportation bill or pass a short-term extension before the current authorization expires October 29. Keep in mind that the Senate passed long-term legislation known as the DRIVE Act before the August recess. It now awaits activity in the House.</p>
Explore Possibility of Passing Legislation to Increase Local Government License Plate Fees for Funding Infrastructure	<p>MORPC’s License Plate Task Force’s Chair, Tom Homan, led a conference call with MORPC staff and the Kegler Brown team to discuss next steps in advocating legislation.</p>
Seek Funding for TRAC Projects	<p>The Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has accepted Major/New Project applications for their 2015 project selection round. Four projects were submitted to TRAC from the MORPC transportation planning area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Far East Freeway Phase 1 » Far East Freeway Phases 2 & 3 » Innerbelt I-70/I-71 Phase 5 » South Outerbelt I-270/US-23 Interchange <p>MORPC will provide recommendations on project ranking based on MORPC’s regional priorities, which will be subject to adoption during the late September/early October business meetings. MORPC will be doing a brief presentation on its project prioritization at the October 13, 2015 ODOT TRAC public hearing. These priorities will be formally transmitted to TRAC by October 14, 2015.</p>



TOP ADVOCACY ITEMS

<p>MORPC Creates Clean Power Plan Subcommittee</p>	<p>On August 3, 2015, President Obama and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) announced the Clean Power Plan – a historic and important step in reducing carbon pollution.</p> <p>The new rule requires the nation’s existing power plants to cut emissions 32 percent from the 2005 levels by 2030. In addition, the rule demands that power plants utilize more renewable sources of wind and solar power.</p> <p>The rule assigns each state target goal for reducing carbon pollution from power plants, yet allows each state to create their own custom plan. States are required to submit a version of their plan by 2016, with the final plan following in 2018.</p> <p>The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) created the Clean Power Plan Subcommittee, in order to prepare for Ohio’s Clean Power Plan in 2016. The subcommittee was established in August of 2015 by the Energy and Air Quality Working group, to better understand the Clean Power Plan and the impacts it will have on Central Ohio. The group will study the issue and identify all pertinent information from diversified sources that may be used by MORPC regarding any next steps.</p> <p>The subcommittee, which is chaired by Eric Porr (U.S. Green Building Council), plans to have final recommendations before the end of September and present to the MORPC Commission in November.</p>
---	---

TOP NEWS IN OHIO

DeWine Certifies Term Limit Constitutional Amendment

A group looking to make term limits stricter in the state has cleared its first hurdle on a proposed constitutional amendment after Attorney General Mike DeWine certified the petition language for the “Strengthening Term Limits on State Legislators” issue.

The amendment, brought by the group Eight is Enough Ohio, would limit any legislator to no more than eight years in the same elected office and no more than 12 years for any combination of elected offices. The group was formed earlier this year in response to a proposal being discussed in the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission to extend term limits by four years in each chamber, to 12 total. [See *The Hannah Report*, 5/14/15.]

The issue now heads to the Ohio Ballot Board, which must determine if it is one or more issues to appear on the ballot. After that, supporters will need to collect 305,591 valid signatures in order to make a future ballot.



TOP NEWS IN OHIO

2015 TRAC Project Applications

The [Transportation Review Advisory Council \(TRAC\)](#) of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has accepted Major/New Project applications for their 2015 project selection round. Major/New Projects are transportation projects that have a total project cost greater than \$12 million and “which add transportation capacity, and are critical to the mobility, economic development, and quality of life of the citizens of Ohio.”

Four projects were submitted to TRAC from the MORPC transportation planning area. As part of the TRAC selection process, ODOT requests that metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) such as MORPC prioritize the projects submitted that are within their planning area.

Public comments for the 2015 projects are being accepted through September 11, 2015. MORPC anticipates recommending regional priorities for adoption during the late September/early October business meetings. These priorities will be transmitted to TRAC by October 14, 2015.

Additional information on the TRAC is available on the ODOT TRAC website, including the final [TRAC 2015-2018 Major New Program List](#) for the 2014 project selection round is now available.

Casino Revenues Down in August

Ohio’s four casinos brought in less tax revenue in August than they did in July, as well as from the same period the year before, numbers released by the Ohio Casino Control Commission Tuesday showed.

Combined, the four casinos earned \$66.3 million in August, down from \$69.5 million in July. In August 2014, the casinos earned a combined \$70.8 million.

The Horseshoe Cincinnati Casino jumped to the top in revenues in August, earning \$17.3 million, followed by the Horseshoe Cleveland, which earned \$17.1 million. The top July earner, Hollywood Columbus, fell to fourth with \$15.7 million, behind Hollywood Toledo with \$16.2 million.

The seven racinos around the state also saw a drop in revenues from July, bringing in \$71.8 million in August, compared to \$73.1 million the month prior. The Hard Rock Racino continued to be the top earner with \$18.9 million, up from \$18.7 million in July. Scioto Downs Racino and Racetrack was second with \$12.4 million, down from \$12.8 million. Miami Valley Gaming was third with \$10.4 million, down from \$10.6 million.

Thistledown earned \$8.7 million, down from \$9.2 million. Hollywood Mahoning Valley Race Course earned \$7.9 million, down from \$8.2 million. Hollywood Gaming Dayton Raceway earned \$7.2 million, down from \$7.4 million.

State + National Unemployment

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Ohio’s unemployment rate was down to 5 percent in July, from 5.2 percent in June.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the national unemployment rate in July stayed a 5.3 percent while the nation added 215,000 jobs. The civilian labor force participation rate was 62.6 percent, and the number of discouraged workers, or those that have given up looking for work because they don’t think they can find a job, increased by 15,000.



NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

HB301 (State Employee-Health Care Plan)

On August 17, Representatives Michael Henne and Stephen Huffman co-sponsored HB301, legislation seeking to require the Department of Administrative Services to make a high deductible health care plan available to state employees and state elected officials.

HB302 (Annexed Territory-Levy)

On August 17, Representative Michael Henne introduced HB302, a bill to provide that, beginning five years after a type-II annexation is approved, the annexed territory is subject to a fire, police, or EMS tax levy only if the levy is imposed by the subdivision that provides the fire, police, or EMS service to the territory.

HB304 (Municipal Water Reservoir-Buffers)

On August 25, Representatives David Leland and Michael Stinziano co-sponsored HB304. The bill would eliminate law authorizing the maintenance of buffers around municipal water reservoirs by contiguous property owners.

MORPC LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

- HB301** STATE EMPLOYEE-HEALTH CARE PLAN (HENNE M, HUFFMAN S) To require the Department of Administrative Services to make a high deductible health care plan available to state employees and state elected officials.
Current Status: 8/17/2015 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-301>
- HB302** ANNEXED TERRITORY-LEVY (HENNE M) To provide that, beginning five years after a type-II annexation is approved, the annexed territory is subject to a fire, police, or EMS tax levy only if the levy is imposed by the subdivision that provides the fire, police, or EMS service to the territory.
Current Status: 8/17/2015 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-302>
- HB304** MUNICIPAL WATER RESERVOIR-BUFFERS (LELAND D, STINZIANO M) To eliminate law authorizing the maintenance of buffers around municipal water reservoirs by contiguous property owners.
Current Status: 8/25/2015 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-HB-304>
- SB198** NON-RESIDENT MUNICIPAL INCOME TAX (JORDAN K) To prohibit municipal corporations from levying an income tax on nonresidents' compensation for personal services or on net profits from a sole proprietorship owned by a nonresident.
Current Status: 7/20/2015 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SB-198>



MORPC LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

SJR2 CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING (LAROSE F, SAWYER T) Proposing to enact Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of Article XIX of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to revise the redistricting process for congressional districts.
Current Status: 7/22/2015 - Introduced
State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA131-SJR-2>

STATE + FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UPDATE

State

Local Government Innovation Fund

The latest awards from the Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF) total \$645,152 in grants to 15 recipients around the state and a single loan of \$196,055 to the city of Hamilton. Grove City was awarded \$45,000 for its fleet project, as well as the City of Columbus Police Division being awarded \$15,000 for its police officer selection process.

LGIF comprises two programs under the Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA) -- the Local Government Innovation Program (LGIP) and Local Government Efficiency Program (LGEP) -- which assist communities with service sharing and efficiency improvements in all areas of operation.

Federal

Many Issues for Congress to Consider

Congress has returned to Washington to face several daunting challenges. First, lawmakers must determine a path forward to keep the federal government open past September 30, when current funding expires, followed by major votes on the Iran nuclear deal. Congress must also pass legislation on aviation before September 30. The congressional calendar poses a real challenge to reaching these goals, as there are just a scant ten legislative days scheduled for September, which also includes the first-ever papal address to a joint session of Congress that will virtually close Washington, D.C. for a three-day period this month.

Later this Fall, Congress must address a number of other pressing matters, including raising the nation's debt ceiling by early December, extending the Export-Import Bank, and developing a long-term surface transportation bill or passing a short-term extension once the current authorization expires October 29.



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS TEAM



Provided by Kegler, Brown, Hill + Ritter

Capitol Square, Suite 1800
65 East State Street
Columbus, OH 43215



Steve Tugend

Director
614-462-5424
stugend@keglerbrown.com



Tony Fiore

Of Counsel
614-462-5428
afiore@keglerbrown.com



Lloyd Pierre-Louis

Director
614-462-5477
lpierre-louis@keglerbrown.com



S. Michael Miller

Of Counsel
614-462-5468
mmiller@keglerbrown.com



Rusty Schuermann

Director
614-462-5440
rschuermann@keglerbrown.com



Kitrina Spencer

Government Affairs Specialist
614-462-5400 ext. 264
kspencer@keglerbrown.com