

Senate Highways and Transportation Committee

April 8, 2008

*Presenter: William R. Arnett, Director
Fairfield County Economic Development*

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present to you today. My name is Bill Arnett. I serve as Fairfield County's economic development director. I have worked in economic development in Ohio for more than a decade, and in my experience, transportation and access are keys to securing investment and jobs for local residents and for the State of Ohio.

The Route 33 corridor was identified in Access Ohio as a macro-corridor. The benefits to completing it are many and range from improved public safety to creating an important North-South alternative to Interstate-77 to economic development opportunities for a number of counties, communities and the State of Ohio.

With transportation costs soaring for commercial carriers, completing the US 33 corridor would provide a cost-saving route between Central Ohio and destinations south via I-77. Additionally, completing the macro-corridor would lessen the strain on Interstate-70 between Central Ohio and I-77 in Eastern Ohio.

I would like to thank the legislature and Ohio Department of Transportation for investments that have already been made in the corridor. Construction projects between I-270 and the Ohio River total more than \$330 million with nearly \$170 million in Fairfield County.

Despite tight budgets, now is not the time to slow progress on completing US 33. The Nelsonville Bypass is a key component, which needs to be completed sooner rather than later. Phase-I is to begin this year, but the remaining two phases are not scheduled for completion until 2017 at the earliest. With added time, comes added cost and potentially lost economic opportunities for our state.

Many people are here today to advocate for important transportation projects in Ohio, I encourage you to strongly consider ways to fund completion of the US 33 corridor, including the Nelsonville Bypass, Carroll Interchange and improvements at Pickerington, Allen and Lockville Roads.

Thank you.