



## **2025 Summer General Assembly**

### **County Caucus Notes**

### **Friday, August 8, 2025**

**Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions** – The County Caucus met on Friday, August 8, 2025, at 8:45 a.m. in Heritage Hall Room 156 at the Owens Community College Toledo area campus in Perrysburg, Ohio. Lisa Sobecki, Lucas County Commissioner and the caucus moderator, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone who was present. Introductions were made around the room.

**Caucus members in attendance included:**

Craig LaHote, County Commissioner, Wood County Board of Commissioners  
Scott Miller, County Commissioner, Sandusky County Board of Commissioners  
Lisa Sobecki (Moderator), County Commissioner, Lucas County Board of Commissioners & Second Vice Chair, TMACOG

**Guests in attendance included:**

Ashley Aston, NWO Regional Representative, Office of U.S. Senator Jon Husted  
Lu Cooke, District Advisor, Office of Ohio State Senator Rob McColley  
Rob Jurs, Consultant, LJB Engineering  
Justen Kosmowski, Senior Water & Wastewater Engineer, Fishbeck  
Ron Lajti, Consultant, OHM Advisors  
Mike Libben, Administrator, Ottawa SWCD  
Logan Seggaard, Business Development | Marketing Specialist, DGL Consulting Engineers  
Michael Stormer, Dept. Manager, Highways & Traffic Engineering, Colliers Engineering & Design

**TMACOG staff in attendance included:**

Sandy Spang, Executive Director  
Annsley Mann, Grants & Policy Specialist

**Caucus Overview** – Lisa Sobecki gave an overview of the caucus.

**Discussion of Topics/Issues** – Caucus members discussed the following topics:

**Topic 1 – Ditch Maintenance**

- There was a push by this group to have a proper removal of ash trees from various waterways in Northwest Ohio due to the infestation of those trees by the emerald ash borer, an invasive bug species.
- It was agreed that this was not a Northwest Ohio specific issue, but it is a statewide issue.
- The caucus agreed that the region needs to have a united conversation about the issue and work with the Governor's office.
- Discussions were had about whether this group could use H2Ohio funds to potentially help with the ditch maintenance, but members of the group argued that H2Ohio might not be proper avenue for this issue because they believed it's not necessarily water specific.

## **Topic 2 – Potential Legislation Affecting Metropolitan Planning Organizations in Ohio**

- Caucus members reacted to the news of potential legislation regarding limiting or eliminating the power of MPOs in Ohio, per a press release from a member of the Legislature.
- The issue stems from a single state legislator who is unhappy with one MPO in the Cleveland area.
- It was mentioned that the legislation could include a consolidated model for MPOs. Also mentioned was that many MPOs are affiliated with Councils of Governments (COGs), which are outlined in the Ohio Revised Code.
- The caucus agreed there should be more education about what MPOs do well, with a specific focus on sharing information with state officials.

**Questions for State Lawmakers Panel Discussion** – The caucus chose two potential questions for the afternoon panel discussion:

1. How do we encourage legislation for funding in rural areas with populations less than 150,000?
2. How do we advocate for legislation that supports economic development outside of bringing in/attracting new businesses?

## **New Business/Next Steps**

- Pathways to Public Service event – Presented by TMACOG on October 9 at Owens Community College
  - Goal: to bring TMACOG members together to showcase public service opportunities.
  - Would raise visibility of local government jobs to the general public and would be a great opportunity to get people informed about these jobs.
- There is a need across Northwest Ohio for county engineers – it takes approximately 5 years to become efficient and effective at the job.

**Adjourn** – Commissioner Sobecki thanked everyone for attending the caucus and the session was adjourned.