

**Jim Hoops**  
81<sup>st</sup> Ohio House District

Chair: Public Utilities  
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**Ohio General Assembly  
Ohio House of Representatives  
Representative Jim Hoops**

September 6, 2022

The Honorable Mike DeWine  
Governor  
77 South High Street, 30 Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor DeWine:

I am pleased that you have accepted the invitation of the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce to meet with business leaders about the importance of a free-flow connection between northwest Ohio and central Ohio.

I was encouraged that a solution to the lack of a free-flow connection between these regions would be developed when ODOT, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments came together to finance the study a year ago. The announcement by ODOT to focus short-term efforts on intersection improvements is not the long-term solution many have envisioned over the past 30 years of studies. I find this to be troubling.

The current status of Route 23 in Delaware County creates significant safety concerns and leaves an entire portion of the State of Ohio disconnected from Columbus and central Ohio. Unfortunately, the current problems are only expected to get worse over the next two decades as we see continued growth in both population and economic opportunity.

This is reminiscent of the problems northwest Ohio faced with U.S. Route 24 before those improvements were made. Today, we have a safer route for travelers between Toledo and Fort Wayne. We also have a free-flow connection between our communities to support commerce that did not exist previously. As a former member of the Fort to Port Committee I know firsthand that the Fort-to-Port effort was not an easy path to achieve, but today we are able to see the economic and safety success of the investment that was made. This is the same result that we are seeking in the Delaware region. By the way I will always appreciate the time that you took from your very busy schedule to visit the area in the late 1990's as a US Senator and allowing me to drive you along the route to show you the concerns we had with Route 24.

It is imperative that ODOT continue to seek a long-term solution, most likely a by-pass around Delaware, and address the degradation along the existing Route 23 corridor through Delaware County. Like Fort-to-Port, I understand that a fix will not be easy or inexpensive, but the cost of doing nothing cannot be measured. It is because of projects like this that I supported the increase in the gas tax the last two times. The residents and business community of northwest Ohio deserve this opportunity.

I look forward to working with you and stakeholders from across northwest Ohio to identifying a solution that is in everyone's best interest.

Sincerely,

Jim Hoops  
State Representative 81<sup>st</sup> House District