

Ohio Township Association Legislative Alert



June 9, 2017

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Budget Testimony Ends in Senate

The Senate Finance Committee concluded public testimony this week on [Am. Sub. HB 49](#). The Finance Committee and Senate leadership will be reviewing amendments over the weekend and are expected to release a substitute bill on Monday, June 12. Once accepted, the Senate Finance Committee will hold additional public testimony next week before accepting an omnibus amendment to Sub. HB 49 and reporting it to the full Senate for passage.

The full Senate is expected to pass the budget bill on June 21, at which point it is expected the House will refuse to concur with the Senate's changes thus forcing a conference committee.

The conference committee members of both the House and Senate will develop a compromise version of the legislation, which must be passed by both chambers and signed by the governor by June 30.

According to the most recent tax revenues the Senate will need to address an even bigger budget deficit than originally expected. Senate President Larry Obhof has stated that many of his members are concerned that Ohio's tax revenues will continue to slide and that his chamber is prepared to make significant cuts in order to balance the budget.

Please [click here to view a chart](#) of the items included in [Am. Sub. HB 49](#) that directly or indirectly impact townships.

State's Revenue Continues to Fall

Tax revenue fell below estimates for the ninth straight month in May and now stands \$840.7 million in arrears compared to original budget planning numbers, the Office of Budget and Management reported on June 6. Preliminary revenue data show lagging personal income tax receipts continue to be the main culprit, as the category came in \$88.7 million, or nearly 14%, behind schedule.

State coffers gained some of that underage back in other taxes collected in May, most notably the commercial activity tax, which was almost \$27 million (10.6%) above estimates for the month. However, total tax intake for May was \$67 million, or 3.3%, less than OBM anticipated when planning for state budget expenditures several months ago.

Director Keen said in an interview that the shortfall is consistent with what analysts expected when they announced the need to adjust spending downward by at least \$800 million. He said the weakness in tax receipts has been consistent over about the past 18 months, and that the state will have to adjust accordingly.

Agency spokesman John Charlton said analysts still see the state ending FY 2017 in the black. That's because spending on state programs, especially Ohio's share of Medicaid, has significantly lagged projections for the year. OBM's monthly financial report issued in May showed General Revenue Fund underspending at about \$1.17 billion, with Medicaid accounting for more than \$872 million of the total.

Legislative Activity This Week

Tuesday, June 6

Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions

HB 27 BWC BUDGET (Brinkman) To make changes to the Workers' Compensation Law, to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017, and ending June 30, 2019, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs.

Business interests, local governments and citizens on Tuesday spoke in favor of the Bureau of Workers' Compensation's two-year budget. Specifically, the Ohio Municipal League asked the Senate to retain the provision regarding firefighter cancer coverage as a compromise reached between cities and villages and the firefighters' union.

Wednesday, June 7

House Government Accountability & Oversight

HB 218 PARK DISTRICTS (Seitz) To expand a probate court's powers and duties with regard to a park district.

Former State Representative and current Probate Judge Tim Grendell spoke in favor of the legislation. He stated that the bill will both codify and clarify an Ohio Supreme Court ruling and save taxpayers money by avoiding conflict and confusion.

HB 226 FIREWORKS (Seitz, Sweeney) To establish a fireworks study group to review and make recommendations regarding the Fireworks Law, to extend to July 1, 2020, the moratorium on issuing fireworks manufacturer and wholesaler licenses, to eliminate, beginning January 1, 2021, the moratorium on geographic transfer of fireworks manufacturer and wholesaler licenses, and, beginning July 1, 2020, to impose a fee on the retail sale of consumer grade fireworks in this state and to expand the ability of individuals to obtain 1.3G display fireworks and obtain and use 1.4G consumer fireworks.

The Ohio Fireworks Safety Coalition, medical professionals, and fire officials spoke in opposition of the legislation.

Legislative Activity Next Week

Tuesday, June 13

Senate Insurance & Financial Institutions (Ch. Hottinger, 466-5838), Finance Hearing Rm., 9:30 a.m.

HB 27 BWC BUDGET (Brinkman) To make changes to the Workers' Compensation Law, to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017, and ending June 30, 2019, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs.

3rd Hearing-Opponent & interested party testimony

House Financial Institutions, Housing & Urban Development (Ch. Dever, 466-8120), Rm. 116, 12:45 p.m.

HB 251 SUBDIVISION INVESTMENTS (Greenspan) To increase from five to ten years the maturity period of other political subdivision's bonds and obligations eligible for investment of a subdivision's interim moneys.

1st Hearing-Sponsor testimony

Wednesday, June 14

Senate Ways & Means (Ch. Eklund, 644-7718), S. Hearing Rm., 9 a.m.

SB 123 PROPERTY TAX COMPLAINTS (Coley) To limit the right to initiate most types of property tax complaints to the property owner and the county recorder of the county in which the property

is located.

2nd Hearing-Proponent testimony



BWC to Offer Rebates Again & Expand Safety Grant Program

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation is setting aside \$44 million over the next two years to improve worker safety and wellness. The money is part of a plan that the Ohio BWC announced in March to rebate \$1.1 billion in premiums to Ohio's private and public employers. It was approved June 2 by the BWC's board and is expected to begin in January 2018.

Of the \$1.1 billion rebate program, \$967 million will go to private employers and \$133 million to local governments and public school districts. Employers will begin receiving rebate checks in July 2017. Details of eligibility will be posted to bwc.ohio.gov in the near future, but generally the employer must have been billed premium for the policy year ending June 30, 2016 (Dec. 31, 2015 for public employers), and be current in meeting their policy requirements. Employers with an out-standing BWC balance will have their rebate first applied to that balance. Most rebates will equal 66% of the employer's premium for calendar year 2015 for public employers.

The new safety program is for employers with 50 or fewer employees in specific high-risk industries and for injured workers with certain types of injuries. The industries include construction, manufacturing, police and fire, and agriculture. Smoking-cessation programs, health coaching and chronic-disease management will be among the services that will be offered.

In addition to this program, BWC will extend for another two years a \$15 million-a-year program that provides safety grants for employers. As part of that extension, BWC is targeting two high-risk occupations: firefighting and employers that serve disabled children and adults.

BWC will set aside \$2 million a year over the two years for fire departments to purchase equipment, including personal protective equipment, to minimize exposure to dangerous environmental elements. Another \$2 million a year will be spent on training and equipment aimed at preventing injuries among social- and health-care workers serving disabled children and adults.

The final \$2 million will be used for a statewide safety-awareness and education campaign for slips, trips, falls, overexertion and motor-vehicle accidents. These are responsible for more than 60% of workplace injuries.

SURVEY - PLEASE HELP!

Low Volume Roads

The Ohio Research Institute for Transportation and the Environment (ORITE) at Ohio University is currently working on a research project as part of Ohio's Research Initiative for Locals (ORIL) Research Program funded through Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) regarding chip seal applications on low-volume routes.

The goal of this study is to assess the current state of chip sealing on low-volume roads maintained by counties, townships and municipalities. To meet the objectives of the study a questionnaire was developed to collect information about chip seal practices directly from Ohio pavement preservation practitioners. Additionally, respondents who believe they have particularly successful (or unsuccessful) chip seal practices or projects are invited to indicate their willingness to contribute additional information to be used as a case study for the research. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The results of the synthesis will assist with the research goal of developing chip seal best practices for low volume roads.



Townships may complete the questionnaire by clicking [here](https://ohio.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9yIF5hlfjyX788d) or cutting and pasting this web address in your browser - https://ohio.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9yIF5hlfjyX788d.

Please complete the survey by June 30, 2017.

Should you have any questions about this survey, please contact Mary Robbins, PhD, or Roger Green, PhD, at the number listed below.

ORITE at Ohio University
(740) 681-3739

Looking for a Few Good Volunteers

Each year, the Ohio Township Association presents trophies and other awards for 4-H participants at the Ohio State Fair. The fair will take place July 26 - Aug. 6, and the OTA needs your help.

If you are interested in presenting a state fair award, contact Perry Brock, OTA State Fair Committee Chairman, at lpbrock1@msn.com or 304-634-4715.

At least two volunteers are needed each day. Volunteers receive a free parking pass and free admission.

Photos and thank you letters from recipients are included in the *Ohio Township News* magazine.



Ohio Fire Expo - June 24

Join the Ohio State Fire Marshal's office and the Central Ohio Antique Fire Apparatus Association for antique fire trucks, a flea market, hands-on fire safety demos and activities for children and adults, and much more! Parking and admission are free. Food concessions will be available for purchase.



Ohio Township Association

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