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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
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Legislative Budget
Office

S.B. 54
135th General Assembly

Final Analysis

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Primary Sponsors: Sens. Reynolds and Sykes

Effective date: Operating appropriations effective January 2, 2025; all other provisions effective April 3, 2025; one item partially vetoed

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SUMMARY

- Makes various operating appropriations for FY 2025 and capital appropriations for the FY 2025-FY 2026 biennium.
- Expands eligibility for sports site selection grants.
- Creates the Ohio River Commission and the Ohio Ireland Trade Commission.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Appropriations

The act appropriates, reappropriates, transfers, and redirects funds for various purposes, as described in the following table. All operating appropriations are for FY 2025 and capital appropriations are for the FY 2025-FY 2026 biennium. For more detailed information about the appropriations, see LSC's [Final Fiscal Note \(PDF\)](#), which is available on the General Assembly's website, legislature.ohio.gov.

S.B. 54 Appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
Secretary of State (partially vetoed)	Transfers \$15 million from the Controlling Board Emergency Purposes/Contingencies Fund to reimburse county boards of elections for costs related to the May 2025 primary and special election. The Governor vetoed a provision that would have required the Secretary of State to wait to provide reimbursement until after the

S.B. 54 Appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
	election, which, according to the veto message, was not the intention of the General Assembly. ¹
Attorney General	Appropriates \$600,000 for the Pike County Capital Case. ²
Department of Natural Resources	<p>Redirects an \$18,000 capital earmark from Rockford Community Park Public Restrooms to Rockford Community Park Improvements.</p> <p>Redirects a \$7,500 capital earmark from the Antwerp Riverside Park Fitness Trail to the Paulding County Trails Project.</p> <p>Redirects a \$350,000 capital earmark from Fort Jennings Park Pedestrian Bridge and Park Improvements to \$250,000 to the Putnam County Historical Society Museum and \$100,000 to the Paulding County Trails Project.</p> <p>Redirects a \$75,000 capital earmark from the Van Wert Reservoir Trails to Hiestand Woods Park and Preserve.³</p>
Departments of Natural Resources and Mental Health and Addiction Services	Changes the funding source for a \$70,000 capital earmark supporting the Madeira Dawson Promenade Connector from a fund in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to a fund in the Department of Natural Resources. ⁴
Facilities Construction Commission	<p>Transfers \$500,000 capital appropriation and earmark for the Alliance for Working Together from Lakeland Community College to the Facilities Construction Commission.</p> <p>Increases a capital earmark for Medina County Radio System – Seville Tower by \$100,000, but also eliminates an earmark in the same amount from the Facilities Construction Commission capital reappropriations budget for the same project.</p> <p>Redirects a \$300,000 earmark from the Gloria Theater and the Urbana Youth Center improvements to the Champaign County YMCA project.⁵</p>

¹ Section 4. The Governor's [veto message \(PDF\)](#) and [disapproved language \(PDF\)](#) are available on the General Assembly's website, legislature.ohio.gov.

² Section 12.

³ Section 10.

⁴ Section 6.

⁵ Section 6.

S.B. 54 Appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
Office of Budget and Management	<p>Renames a \$400,000 capital earmark from “Milford Five Points Landing Community Center” to “Milford Five Points Landing.”</p> <p>Removes a \$240,000 capital earmark for the Preble County Fairgrounds Exhibit Fence and a \$236,900 capital earmark for the Preble County Fairgrounds Roof; adds the \$700,000 to the earmark for the Preble County Fairgrounds Stall Barns Project.</p> <p>Increases from \$350,000 to \$450,000 a capital earmark for Medina County Radio System – Seville Tower.</p> <p>Decreases from \$300,000 to \$200,000, a capital earmark for Medina County Sheriff Office Jail Safety Enhancement.</p> <p>Eliminates a \$1 million capital earmark for Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton – West Carrollton Health Center Construction, and instead establishes two \$500,000 earmarks, one for West Carrollton River District Whitewater Park and one for Saint Vincent de Paul Social Services Emergency Shelter for Men.⁶</p>
Department of Public Safety	<p>Removes a \$197,000 earmark for a mail room pilot program at the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati and reallocates \$98,500 for mail room security pilot programs at the Jewish Federation of Cleveland and the Mandel Jewish Community Center and \$98,500 to JewishAkron for a mail room security pilot program.⁷</p>
Broadcast Educational Media Commission	<p>Appropriates \$2,143,003 to the Commission for Ohio Public TV-Radio (\$2,054,503) and Ohio Radio Reading Services Equipment (\$88,500) for the FY 2025-2026 capital biennium and increases the authority of the Treasurer of State to issue and sell new bonds to support the appropriation.⁸</p>
Facilities Construction Commission (FCC) and Ohio University	<p>Moves a \$50,000 capital earmark for the Chesterhill Lions Club from FCC to Ohio University.⁹</p>

⁶ Section 10.

⁷ Section 12.

⁸ Section 10.

⁹ Section 10.

S.B. 54 Appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
Department of Rehabilitation and Correction	Reappropriates \$100,000 to the new Medina County Sheriff Office Jail Safety Enhancement Fund and redirects up to \$100,000, to support the new fund. ¹⁰ Appropriates \$37,269,559 from GRF to allow for state employee compensation changes. ¹¹
Department of Job and Family Services	Appropriates \$3,334,310 from GRF to allow for state employee compensation changes. ¹²
Mental Health and Addiction Services	Combines two reappropriated capital earmarks (\$1 million for the Cuyahoga Commission Restoration of Mental Health Diversion Center and \$700,000 for Cuyahoga County) into one earmark, \$1.7 million for the Cuyahoga County Mental Health Diversion Center. ¹³ Increases by \$250,000 and earmarks a capital reappropriation for the Saint Vincent de Paul Social Services Emergency Shelter for Men. ¹⁴ Appropriates \$250,000 and earmarks for the 1N5 Foundation to provide suicide prevention in schools. ¹⁵
Stark Technical College	Moves a \$2 million capital appropriation for Perry Township Whispering Grace Horses and Freedom Farm from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to Stark Technical College. ¹⁶
Central State University	Appropriates \$125,000 each for the Dayton Dream Center Transitional Housing and East End Whole Family Services Hub Facility Expansion and Renovation. Eliminates a reappropriation for YWCA Dayton – Huber Heights Campus. ¹⁷

¹⁰ Section 10.

¹¹ Section 7.

¹² Section 8.

¹³ Section 10.

¹⁴ Section 10.

¹⁵ Section 6.

¹⁶ Section 8.

¹⁷ Section 10.

S.B. 54 Appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
Ohio History Connection	Expands the use of the Holocaust and Genocide Memorial and Education Commission earmark to include costs incurred by the education and memorial museums to facilitate visits. ¹⁸
Department of Natural History and Youngstown State University	Redirects a \$250,000 reappropriation at Youngtown State University, for the Western Reserve Port Authority, instead to the Department of Natural Resources for the Vienna Air Heritage Park. ¹⁹
Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)	Transfers \$10 million from the Controlling Board Emergency Purposes/Contingencies Fund to ODA to disburse to soil and water conservation districts for 2024 drought relief purposes. ²⁰

Sport site selection grant

Under continuing law, counties, municipalities, or local organizing committees hosting a sporting event may apply to the Director of Development for a grant from the Sports Event Grant Fund to defray costs associated with hosting these events.²¹ The act expands eligibility for sports site selection grants to include any “competition” that is *either* governed by an international federation or included in the Olympic games, the Pan American games, or the Commonwealth games. Prior law limited eligibility to only “sports” that met *both* of those criteria.²²

Ohio River Commission

The act creates the Ohio River Commission within the Department of Development to develop and promote economic development, marine cargo terminal operations, and travel and tourism on the Ohio River and its tributaries. The Commission consists of the following members:

1. The Director of Development, or the Director’s designee, to serve as chairperson;
2. The Director of Transportation, or the Director’s designee;
3. The Director of Natural Resources, or the Director’s designee; and
4. Six members representing the general public who are Ohio residents or designees of businesses licensed in Ohio – three appointed by the Senate President and three appointed by the Speaker of the House. The appointed members may represent private

¹⁸ Section 12.

¹⁹ Section 10.

²⁰ Section 5.

²¹ R.C. 122.121, not in the act.

²² R.C. 122.12(l).

industry associated or affiliated with marine cargo terminal operations on the Ohio River and private industry possessing experience in marine cargo terminal operations or travel and tourism on the river.²³

Ohio River Commission's powers and duties

The act allows the Commission to do the following, subject to available funding:

1. Employ an Executive Director, a secretary-treasurer, and other employees that the Commission considers appropriate;
2. Adopt bylaws;
3. Receive, promote, support, and consider recommendations, from public or private planning organizations, and develop a master plan for Ohio River infrastructure and transportation projects;
4. Coordinate with relevant entities regarding Ohio River infrastructure and transportation;
5. In conjunction with relevant state agencies, coordinate with other governmental entities regarding Ohio River issues;
6. Collect, track, and maintain key statistics and data regarding commerce on the Ohio River and make an annual report to the General Assembly;
7. Ensure the monitoring of federal, state, and local policies, programs, and priorities pertaining to the development and operation of marine cargo terminals and travel and tourism on the Ohio River;
8. Prioritize policies, programs, and issues identified in the Ohio Maritime Strategy²⁴ prepared by the Department of Transportation (ODOT) and in ODOT's Economic Impact of the Ohio River Maritime Activity study²⁵;
9. Evaluate policies, programs, programs of research, and priorities to offset the continued decline in coal production and consumption within the Ohio River Basin and promote prosperity in Ohio's Appalachian region;
10. Administer development funds and seek, support, and assist the Ohio River industry in the utilization of available grants, loans, and other finance mechanisms in support of Ohio River projects;

²³ R.C. 122.29(A) and (B)(1).

²⁴ See [Ohio Maritime Strategy](#), available on the Department of Transportation's website: transportation.ohio.gov by conducting a keyword "Maritime Strategy" search.

²⁵ See [The Economic Impacts of Ohio River Maritime Activity](#), available on the Department of Transportation's website: transportation.ohio.gov by conducting a keyword "Economic Impacts of Ohio River Maritime Activity" search.

11. Represent the interests of Ohio in regional, national, and international forums pertaining to economic development, marine cargo terminals, and travel and tourism on the Ohio River and its tributaries;
12. Coordinate, for dissemination and publication, information regarding the Commission and its related activities; and
13. Raise funds and accept gifts and other money, to be deposited to the Ohio River Commission Fund created by the act.²⁶

The Commission, or the Department of Development on its behalf, may apply for and receive grants from the federal government for the benefit of Ohio River infrastructure, transportation, or recreation and tourism.²⁷

Assistance and expenditures

The act allows the Department of Development to assist the Commission in furtherance of the Commission's purposes. The Department of Development and ODOT, at the request of the Commission, must cooperate with the Commission to implement the act's provisions. The Department of Development must provide meeting and office space for the Commission. It also specifies that expenditures by the Department, the Commission, or any other state agency for capital improvements to promote economic development, marine cargo terminal operations, and travel and tourism on the Ohio River and its tributaries are subject to the approval of the Controlling Board.²⁸

Ohio Ireland Trade Commission

The act creates the Ohio Ireland Trade Commission to study potential means of advancing all of the following between Ohio and Ireland:

- Bilateral trade and investment;
- Policy issues of mutual interest;
- Business and academic exchanges;
- Mutual economic support;
- Mutual investment in infrastructure; and
- Other issues as determined by the Commission.²⁹

Members and procedures

The Commission consists of the following nine members:

²⁶ R.C. 122.292.

²⁷ R.C. 122.291.

²⁸ R.C. 122.29(F) and (G).

²⁹ R.C. 149.60(A).

- Six members of the General Assembly – three senators appointed by the Senate President and three representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House– who have knowledge of, or current or past involvement in, organizations that promote Irish affairs, or have interest in the wellbeing of trade relations between Ohio and Ireland;
- Three members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, as follows:
 - One member who represents a state institution of higher education;
 - One member who represents the Ohio Chamber of Commerce or a successor organization that advances business interests in Ohio; and
 - One member who represents Irish American communities or interest in Ohio.³⁰

Activities

The Commission must meet and hold hearings at the places it designates throughout the state. By July 3, 2026 (one year after the members must be appointed), and annually thereafter, the Commission must file a report with the Governor, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House. The report must discuss the Commission's activities during the past year and any associated findings and recommendations.

The Commission may raise funds through direct solicitation or other fundraising events independently or with other groups. Additionally, it may accept gifts, grants, and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and private organizations and institutions. All funds must be deposited in the Ohio Ireland Trade Commission Fund, which the act creates in the state treasury. The Commission must use the fund to defray its administrative expenses and to carry out its purposes.³¹

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-14-23
Reported, S. Finance	03-29-23
Passed Senate (31-0)	03-29-23
Reported, H. Finance	12-17-24
Passed House (77-17)	12-18-24
Senate concurred in House amendments (29-1)	12-18-24

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³⁰ R.C. 149.60(B) through (E).

³¹ R.C. 149.60(F) and (G).