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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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S.B. 54*
135th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

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Version: As Reported by House Finance

Primary Sponsors: Sens. Reynolds and Sykes

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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 bill 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.

Sub. S.B. 54 appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
Secretary of State	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. ¹

* This analysis was prepared before the report of the House Finance Committee appeared in the House Journal. Note that the legislative history may be incomplete.

¹ Section 4.

Sub. S.B. 54 appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
Attorney General	Appropriates \$600,000 for the Pike County Capital Case. ²
Department of Natural Resources	Redirects a \$18,000 earmark from Rockford Community Park Public Restrooms to Rockford Community Park Improvements. Redirects \$7,500 from the Antwerp Riverside Park Fitness Trail to the Putnam County Trails Project. Redirects a \$75,000 earmark from the Van Wert Reservoir Trails to Hiestand Woods Park and Preserve. ³
Departments of Natural Resources and Mental Health and Addiction Services	Changes the funding source for a \$70,000 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	Transfers \$500,000 appropriation and earmark for the Alliance for Working Together from Lakeland Community College to the Facilities Construction Commission. Decreases reappropriations by \$100,000 and eliminates an earmark for the Medina County Radio System – Seville Tower. Redirects a \$300,000 earmark from the Gloria Theater and the Urbana Youth Center improvements to the Champaign County YMCA project. ⁵
Office of Budget and Management	Redirects \$350,000 from Fort Jennings Park Pedestrian Bridge and Park Improvements to \$250,000 to the Paulding County Historical Society Museum and \$100,000 to the Putnam County Trails Project. Renames a \$400,000 earmark from “Milford Five Points Landing Community Center” to “Milford Five Points Landing.” Removes a \$240,000 earmark for the Preble County Fairgrounds Exhibit Fence and a \$236,900 earmark for the Preble County Fairgrounds Roof; adds the \$700,000 to the earmark for the Preble County Fairgrounds Stall Barns Project.

² Section 12.

³ Section 10.

⁴ Section 6.

⁵ Section 6.

Sub. S.B. 54 appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
	<p>Increases from \$350,000 to \$450,000 an earmark for Medina County Radio System – Seville Tower.</p> <p>Decreases from \$300,000 to \$200,000, an earmark for Medina County Sheriff Office Jail Safety Enhancement.</p> <p>Eliminates a \$1 million 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	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
Broadcast Educational Media Commission	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
Facilities Construction Commission (FCC) and Ohio University	Moves a \$50,000 earmark for the Chesterhill Lions Club from the FCC to Ohio University. ⁹
Department of Rehabilitation and Correction	<p>Reappropriates \$100,000 to the new Medina County Sheriff Jail Safety Enhancement Fund and redirects up to \$100,000, to support the new fund.¹⁰</p> <p>Appropriates \$37,269,559 from GRF to allow for state employee compensation changes.¹¹</p>

⁶ Section 10.

⁷ Section 12.

⁸ Section 10.

⁹ Section 10.

¹⁰ Section 10.

¹¹ Section 7.

Sub. S.B. 54 appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
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 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 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
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

¹² Section 8.

¹³ Section 10.

¹⁴ Section 10.

¹⁵ Section 6.

¹⁶ Section 8.

¹⁷ Section 10.

¹⁸ Section 12.

Sub. S.B. 54 appropriations	
Agency	Purpose
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 current 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.²¹ Grant funds are used to defray the county's, municipality's, or local organizing committee's cost to host the event pursuant to an agreement with the event sponsor. The bill 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. Current law limits eligibility to "sports" that meet *both* of those criteria.²²

Ohio River Commission

The bill 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. It specifies that 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, who are Ohio residents or a designee of a business licensed in Ohio, representing the general public – three appointed by the Senate President and three appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The appointed members may represent private industry associated or affiliated with marine cargo terminal

¹⁹ Section 10.

²⁰ Section 5.

²¹ R.C. 122.121, not in the bill.

²² R.C. 122.12(l).

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

Ohio River Commission's powers and duties

The bill allows the Commission to do all of the following, subject to available funding through appropriations made directly by the General Assembly or the Controlling Board to the Commission:

1. Employ an Executive Director who has appropriate experience as determined by the Commission, and a secretary-treasurer and other employees that the Commission considers appropriate (and may fix the compensation of the employees);
2. Adopt, ratify, amend, and repeal bylaws necessary and proper for the regulation of its affairs and the conduct of its business and rules to implement and make effective its powers and duties;
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 port authorities, private port operators, metropolitan planning organizations, regional transportation planning organizations, local development districts, Ohio River service entities, utility service providers, and agricultural, tourism, and recreational interests, regarding Ohio River infrastructure and transportation;
5. In conjunction with applicable state agencies, coordinate with state agencies, local governments and communities, other states, and the federal government 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

²³ R.C. 122.29(A) and (B)(1).

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

of the Ohio River Maritime Activity study,²⁵ as those or similar documents or reports are published and updated by ODOT;

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;
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 in connection with the Ohio River; and
13. Raise funds through direct solicitation or other fundraising events alone, or with other groups, and accept gifts, grants, and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and private organizations and institutions. The funds, gifts, grants, or bequests are deposited to the Ohio River Commission Fund created by the bill.²⁶

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

Assistance and expenditures

The bill 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 bill'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

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.

²⁶ R.C. 122.292.

²⁷ R.C. 122.291.

²⁸ R.C. 122.29(F) and (G).

Ohio Ireland Trade Commission

The bill 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:

- Six members of the General Assembly – three senators appointed by the Senate President and three representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives – 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 bill requires the Commission to meet and hold hearings at the places it designates throughout the state. Within 15 months of the bill's effective date (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.

Under the bill, 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

²⁹ R.C. 149.60(A).

³⁰ R.C. 149.60(B) through (E).

and private organizations and institutions. All funds must be deposited in the Ohio Ireland Trade Commission Fund, which the bill 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	---

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³¹ R.C. 149.60(F) and (G).