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S.B. 155*
135th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

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Version: As Reported by Senate Transportation

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Romanchuk

Margaret E. Marcy, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Repeals the requirement that the Department of Transportation construct certain interstate interchanges.
- Requires the Director of Transportation, in consultation with or led by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, to conduct a study to develop a traffic congestion management strategic plan and submit a related report.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Repeal of required interchanges

The bill repeals a provision, enacted in H.B. 23 of the 135th General Assembly (the transportation budget), that requires the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to construct certain interstate interchanges. The provision specifies that ODOT must ensure that limited access exit and entrance ramps to interstate highways exist at least every 4.5 miles in adjacent municipal corporations, provided that:

- Each municipal corporation has a population above 35,000 (based on the most recent federal decennial census);
- The municipal corporations are located in different counties; and
- At least one of the municipal corporations is located in a county with a population above one million (based on the most recent federal decennial census).¹

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

¹ R.C. 5501.60, repealed by the bill.

The current provision does not require ODOT to seek prior approval for the construction from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) or the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal law currently prohibits states from adding “any points of access to, or exit from” projects on the Interstate Systems without approval by the U.S. DOT Secretary.² Additionally, the FHWA has released policy guidelines specifying the forms of operational safety analyses that a state must conduct and submit in order to receive approval for new or revised access points to the Interstate.³ The bill’s repeal of the required construction of the interchanges removes any potential conflict with the federal requirements.

Traffic congestion study

The bill requires the Director of Transportation, in consultation with the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) to conduct a study to develop a traffic congestion management strategic plan. At the Director’s discretion, NOACA may lead the study. The study must examine the area along I-71 bounded by U.S. Route 42 (north and west), State Route 303 (south), and West 130th Street (east). The area is the same congested area along I-71 that is near the proposed interchange repealed by the bill.

The Director or NOACA must complete the study by December 31, 2026, and submit a report of the study’s findings to all of the following:

1. The Governor;
2. The Speaker of the House;
3. The Senate President;
4. The chairpersons of the House and Senate committees pertaining to transportation; and
5. The chief executive officer and legislative authority of Strongsville, North Royalton, and Brunswick.

The report may include solutions to mitigate and strategically manage any traffic congestion concerns found during the study.⁴

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	09-14-23
Reported, S. Transportation	---

ANSB0155RS-135/sb

² 23 United States Code 111.

³ See “[Policy on Access to the Interstate System](#)” available on the FHWA’s website at: highways.dot.gov.

⁴ Section 2.