



WAYNE COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS



Matt Martin ★ Jonathan Hofstetter ★ Dave McMillen

May 20, 2026

The Wayne County Board of Commissioners is committed to being responsible stewards of every tax dollar entrusted to us by the residents of Wayne County. While a proposed \$5.00 increase in license plate fees may appear modest, we recognize that it represents more than just a small additional cost—it reflects the trust our residents place in us to make thoughtful, fiscally responsible decisions.

Throughout this process, we made public input a priority. At the request of the Wayne County Engineer and mandated by Ohio Revised Code, two public hearings were held to provide factual information about how local tax dollars are currently used to maintain county roads and bridges. Under the Ohio Revised Code, the Commissioners have the authority to enact one final \$5.00 increase in license plate fees, which would generate approximately \$700,000 annually dedicated exclusively to road and bridge maintenance.

While \$700,000 is a significant amount of money, the Wayne County Engineer made clear that this increase alone would not substantially address the long-term infrastructure challenges facing our county. During the hearings, residents offered valuable feedback and thoughtful suggestions. A common theme emerged: meaningful and lasting solutions will require legislative action at the state level.

We agree with that assessment.

The Commissioners have already begun discussions with our State Representative and with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio to advocate for broader reforms. These include ensuring that a greater share of state-collected gas tax revenues and license plate fees are returned directly to local governments, where they can be used to maintain the roads and bridges our residents depend on every day.

We also heard concerns about the current economic climate. At a time when many families are facing rising costs and increased tax burdens, there is understandable hesitation toward any additional fees, regardless of their intended purpose.

After carefully considering the public input received at the hearings and through direct communication from residents, the Wayne County Board of Commissioners has decided not to move forward with the proposed \$5.00 license plate fee increase.

This decision reflects both the concerns expressed by our residents and the understanding that the proposed increase would not provide the substantial improvements needed to solve our infrastructure challenges.

We remain committed to working with our state and local partners to pursue long-term solutions, while continuing to maintain Wayne County's roads and bridges in the most fiscally responsible manner possible using the resources currently available to us.

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