

## **Kasich Outlines Turnpike Plans, Says Asset 'Underutilized'**

Gov. John Kasich looked to sell Ohio transportation officials on his plans for the Ohio Turnpike, asking for support and promising not to move forward if the deal does not make sense.

Kasich and Jerry Wray, his director of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), have been laying the groundwork for a possible privatization of the turnpike for months, a move that has drawn opposition from northern Ohio officials and Democrats.

On Tuesday, Kasich spoke about his administration's plans while addressing the Ohio Transportation Engineering Conference in Columbus, saying that if the state has an "underutilized asset" like the turnpike, it should look to use it to build a stronger state. He compared plans to his administration's recent efforts to sell five state prisons, saying if the deal does not appear to be good for Ohio, then he will not go through with it.

"We don't know what we're going to do yet," Kasich said, listing possibilities such as a long-term lease or retaining control and bonding against future revenues.

Proceeds from the effort would go to help Ohio's transportation infrastructure, the governor said. He promised a majority of the proceeds would go to projects north of U.S. Route 30, although some funding would go to other projects in the state.

The governor also said that the state would use funding to address concerns from the community. He said communities along the turnpike have been affected by it but the Ohio Turnpike Commission has a policy not to address those problems. He said the state will not ignore those concerns under his plan.

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