

What is Ohio Issue 2 on the May ballot? Voters could extend \$2.5B public works program

Ohio Issue 2 would extend a program that pays for roads, bridges and other public works projects and increase the spending cap

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Adding a [100-foot-plus retaining wall along Gosling Road](#) in Hamilton County. Expanding [Hamilton Road to Morse Road in Franklin County](#). Addressing flooding and poor drainage in [Summit County's Twinsburg Township](#).

[These projects](#) – and more than 18,000 others – were paid for with the State Capital Improvement Program. This voter-approved program allows Ohio to use its general revenues as debt support to issue general obligation bonds.

Ohioans first voted for the program as a lawmaker-backed constitutional amendment in 1987 and have since renewed it three times. Now, Ohioans must decide in May whether to extend the program and increase the spending cap.

What is Ohio Issue 2?

Issue 2 would allow Ohio to issue general obligation bonds up to \$250 million annually or \$2.5 billion over the decade. Currently, the cap is set at \$200 million annually.

Municipalities, counties, townships and other governmental entities can apply for this money to build roads, bridges, sewage treatment systems, water supply systems, landfills and stormwater and sanitary collection systems.

The program has paid for 18,858 projects since its inception, Ohio Public Works Commission Director Linda Bailiff said. Oftentimes, that

money is leveraged to obtain more money from local, state and federal funds.

State lawmakers put the issue before voters by passing [House Joint Resolution 8](#) with bipartisan support last year. Only [five legislators, all Republicans](#), voted against the proposal.

What would a vote for Issue 2 do?

A vote for Issue 2 would extend the program that pays for roads, bridges and other public works projects and increase the cap.

[Backers say Issue 2 won't increase taxes](#) because the money to repay project bonds is already built into the state's budgeting.

What would a vote against Issue 2 do?

A vote against Issue 2 would end the program after the last projects are awarded in mid-2025.

[A "no" vote would stop the state from issuing more general obligation bonds](#), which would increase indebtedness to pay for public infrastructure improvements.

Who supports Issue 2?

Nearly all of Ohio's lawmakers, both Republicans and Democrats, back Issue 2. Groups that support the measure include the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Municipal League, the Ohio Mayors Alliance, the Ohio Society of Professional Engineers, the Ohio Township Association and the Affiliated Construction Trades of Ohio, among others.

Proponents formed a group called the [Strong Ohio Communities Coalition](#).

Who opposes Issue 2?

A handful of Republican lawmakers voted against putting this issue on the ballot. Former U.S. Senate candidate Mark Pukita's [Grassroots Freedom Initiative](#) opposes Issue 2, calling it a "stealth bond issue."

The group says a "no" vote would send a message to squishy Republicans.

Does Ohio have a state Issue 1?

No.

Last year, Ohio lawmakers changed the numbering system for statewide ballot issues to eliminate confusion over multiple state Issue 1s. The numbers will now continue sequentially until the state hits Issue 500. Then, Ohio will reset to Issue 1.