

April 25, 2017

Testimony to the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, and Ranking Minority Member Bishoff, thank you for the opportunity to give proponent testimony on House Bill 121.

My name is Tony Radoszewski and I am the President of the Plastics Pipe Institute. We are a North American, non-profit, manufacturing based trade association representing all segments of the plastics piping industry. Our mission is to advance the acceptance and use of plastic pipe systems through research, education, technical expertise and advocacy. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to speak with you this morning.

I have been in the plastics industry over 35 years. Early in my career I saw first hand the effect plastics had in improving safety, transportation, delivery and costs when compared to legacy materials such as glass, paper and metal. Today, it is virtually impossible to find a glass shampoo bottle, a one-gallon paper milk bottle, or a one-pound steel coffee can. Yet when I was a child, all three existed in every grocery store.

The plastics industry is one of continuing evolution and the various types of plastics available today are in par to the number of different applications they find use. When unencumbered by regulations and allowed to be used based on their merit, plastics perform.

In the early 1960's, two engineers from right here in Ohio saw the production of small diameter corrugated tubing being manufactured in Germany for use in the automotive industry. Having both grown up on farms, they had an idea; if it was possible to make

something like this in four inch diameters, it could compete with clay and cement drain tiles, which at the time were made in one-foot lengths and laid end to end in a quite labor-intensive process and limited to specialized contractors.

The introduction of plastic drainage pipe served to reduce both the cost of drain tile installation as well as the amount of labor involved. Rather than set individual sections of clay or cement tile end-to-end in the trench, tile installers had only to unroll a continuous section of lightweight, flexible plastic pipe delivered to the farm in reels up to 2500 feet long.

What these two engineers did was catch lightning in a bottle and in less than one generation they and others displaced a product that had existed for over two thousand years. Would that story be true if the clay and cement drain tile manufacturers were protected from competing with plastics?

By the way, the company started by those two engineers is Advanced Drainage Systems, a billion dollar-plus company whose global headquarters is located in nearby Hilliard.

Because history is replete with examples of plastics displacing legacy materials, the incumbents are pulling out all stops in order to prevent plastics from being able to compete on a level playing field including use of emotionally-based straw man arguments. I would like to address two of these.

The first is that this legislation will take away authority from engineers to control the ultimate design of water systems. Nothing could be farther from the truth. My team, comprised of five engineers with professional licenses and one PhD, and our members, many who are engineers, work everyday with design engineers, civil engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers and nuclear engineers. Our respect for the engineering community is beyond reproach. As I mentioned earlier, one of the key tenets of our mission is education. By educating these professionals to the features and

benefits of plastic pipe systems and showing them the correct way to design their systems, they have come to realize that superior alternatives exist both in long term performance and value. Because so many municipalities restrict the use of plastic pipe, in reality they are now under authoritative control. This legislation would actually free them to use the best product available to serve the community.

The second canard is the statement “this is a solution without a problem.” Municipalities all across Ohio and the US are struggling with finances. Underfunded pensions, diminishing tax revenue, increasing costs for building or repairing an aging infrastructure are all taking a toll on the community purse. It is shown that when municipalities allow open competition, the taxpayer is always the beneficiary as their tax dollars are used not only the most efficiently at first due to lower costs, but also in the long run as plastic pipe systems have a superior service life. So in reality, there is a problem, limited revenue, and it is only exacerbated by the use of one material for water systems.

Any good coach will tell you competition is a great motivator as it forces you to perform at your level best. I believe this holds true for a person or a product. What our industry realized is that fair and open competition doesn't universally exist when it comes to municipal water systems and in order to make it happen, sometimes legislation must be passed to force it. And that's where we are today.

I thank you for your time and strongly encourage you to pass House Bill 121 allowing fair and open competition. Please feel free to contact me directly at 469-499-1046 or email tonyr@plasticpipe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Radoszewski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Radoszewski, President, Plastic Pipe Institute