



City of New Philadelphia, Ohio
New Philadelphia Health District

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To: Senator Dolan, Ranking Member Sykes, Senate Finance Committee members
From: Lee Carl Finley, REHS; Director of Environmental Health, New Phila City Health Dept
Date: 3 June 2021
Re: HB 110 and the provisions regarding city health departments mergers, 3 June 2021 hearing

Dear Senators:

My name is Lee Carl Finley and I am the Director of Environmental Health for the New Philadelphia City Health Department (NPCHD). I have spent almost the entirety of my career in public service, with the vast majority of this service being in public health. I have been in my present position with the city of New Philadelphia for over 10 years.

I am strongly opposed to the recent language in HB 110 that, initially, would have required closure of all city health departments serving fewer than 50,000 residents, and that, as amended, would require an “efficiency and effectiveness” study for those same city health departments. The premise behind this provision is that merging always produces better outcomes. This reasoning is faulty. Please note the example of our health department.

At present, NPCHD offers many services that no other health department in Tuscarawas County offers:

- NPCHD is the only local agency conducting on-site smoking violation inspections in the county. With a merger, the only inspections conducted would be from the state level (most likely by telephone interviews);
- NPCHD is the only local agency conducting manufactured home park inspections;
- NPCHD presently conducts mosquito spraying for a wider variety of issues than does other local agencies. In fact, NPCHD has entered into an MOU with the adjacent township (Goshen Twp) for extensive mosquito abatement. These services would likely be lost with a merger;
- NPCHD is the only local agency offering on-site sewage soil evaluations to its residents;
- NPCHD has, as its goal, numerous inspections beyond the state required minimum inspections for many of its state-mandated environmental health programs (such as food inspections, pool/spa inspections, operational sewage inspections, scrap time inspections, clean fill inspections, etc)

In addition, NPCHD has been a leader in providing public health to its residents. Our immunization nurse has recently been awarded for exceeding state goals in immunizations, serving not only the residents of New Philadelphia, but serving the region as well. Further, with the continued existence of the NPCHD, the residents are guaranteed environmental, nursing and vital stats staff in an emergency (such as a power or water outage). If there were only one health agency in the county, the city would have *no dedicated staff* for the residents of New Philadelphia in an emergency. During the covid-19 emergency, NPCHD has provided approx. 5500 covid immunizations to residents of the area (next page).

Lastly, from a financial standpoint, the residents of the city will have to pay an additional \$385,000 in taxes if the department is forced to merge. There are more important considerations than finances in public health. If this department is forced to merge, the residents of New Philadelphia will lose local access to quality public health services, as well as the residents of Tuscarawas County that utilize these services. Please remove the language regarding anything but voluntary mergers for city health departments.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

New Philadelphia City Health Department vaccine window display of doses administered



Each larger vial (Moderna) contains approx. 10-11 doses.
Each smaller vial (J&J) contains 5-6 doses



Each box of J&J or Moderna contains 10 vials of their respective vaccine



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