

My name is Major Bradley Martin (USAF, Reserves) and I am from Fairborn in Greene County. I am here today to provide proponent testimony in support of HB 193.

I listened to the initial testimony in committee and heard a couple committee members question the risks along with reiterate the benefits of biosolids. What appeared to be lost was the negative impacts these operations have if those operating them do not do so properly. After dealing with one such operation (Dovetail in Bath Township, Greene County) for the past eight years, I am hoping to shed some light on this and to prove why measures like HB 193 are vital to Ohio communities.

I live less than two miles from the Dovetail facility, which produces unpasteurized Class B biosolids, and stores them in an open air 5 million gallon lagoon. The operation is on land leased by farmer Thomas Pitstick, also a former Township Trustee, and was in office when the facility was constructed and started operating. There was no public knowledge of this operation coming to town, and for the first few years, residents were scratching their heads as to what was generating the odor. Residents began suffering unexplained respiratory and gastrointestinal issues (I personally am on several medications I've never had to take before), and children have even vomited at bus stops. This has led to over 7000 GIS-generated odor complaints along with hundreds of complaints levied to the Ohio EPA (and yet, the facility continues to operate as normal). To be clear, this is a population already accustomed to agricultural odors, and it soon became clear this was something else.

Once we became aware of this issue, we took it to our local township trustees, including Pitstick, and for years were dismissed as "not in my backyard" types, until word spread. Fairborn and Bath Township is a military community that is resilient, tolerates a lot, and rarely complains. But, when pushed to the breaking point, the community has shown the resolve to remove and replace obstructive local and county leadership. We who recently voted out all incumbent trustees that were profiting and supportive of this operation. An ethics complaint was levied against them as well. It's taken years, but our movement has gained traction, and is one of the main reasons why this bill is in front of you today.

I understand that there is a need for biosolid generation and the role it plays in agriculture. It is not our aim to regulate these companies out of business or hurt farmers, we just want them to be the good neighbors they claim they are, and to cut out the greenwashing and just be honest. If the Dovetail operation did in fact generate Class A biosolids, we likely would not ever had a public outcry. However, in places like Greene and Morrow Counties, it is being done irresponsibly (and there are multiple EPA violations to prove it), it is harming public quality of life, our waterways, and health. Property values are beginning to take a hit as a result (in Morrow County, they were reduced 25% in areas impacted, Greene County is soon to follow if our efforts to bring the Dovetail operation into compliance fail). If allowed to operate with impunity, Fairborn, a city of 34,000, will stand to lose millions of dollars in tax revenue as a large swath of the city is impacted by this. Most residents surveyed have planned to move away as a result of this, and would have never moved here if they knew this operation was here.

From experience, once an operation is in place, it is extremely difficult to bring it into compliance. We have waited eight years for the EPA to enforce anything. This bill will allow residents to better know what they are in for, and to better compel operators from the beginning to be good neighbors. We do not want fellow Ohioans to deal what we have had to for the better part of the last decade.