

Economic and Workforce Development Committee

October 17th, 2023

Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for taking the time for this testimony. My name is Brandon Lambert, and I am the Ward 3 Councilman from Brunswick. Ward 3 is on the border of Strongsville and Brunswick and my residents will be directly impacted by the passage of House Bill 23 earlier this year. I am writing in strong support of the passage of House Bill 276, as introduced by Representative Ray and Representative Miller.

This bill was specifically written by Strongsville politicians to inject an I-71 interchange off Boston Road on the border of Strongsville and Brunswick with zero regard for residents of either municipality. Boston Road is an undulating light residential road that also has a jet fuel pipeline running underneath the road.

The forced building of such an interchange would not only supersede federal regulations and state precedents, but it would be such a burden on the City of Brunswick that it would cripple our ability to provide the quality of life for our residents that they have been accustomed to enjoying for years. Building this interchange would mean a domino effect that goes well beyond the initial build of the ramp(s). The city would have to bear the burden of multiple projects,

including but not limited to:

- a) Leveling a mile of undulating residential road to prevent line of sight issues for the heavily increased traffic loads, both residential and commercial.
- b) Relocating a jet fuel pipeline at not only at great financial cost, but a legitimate safety risk to our residents as this pipeline is quite literally only 10's of feet away from numerous homes.
- c) The eminent domain of homes on both the Strongsville side and Brunswick side of the municipality border.

The City of Brunswick has had excellent representation recently on this issue and for that I am immensely proud of our representatives and more importantly our residents. However, there is one group of people that I truly and deeply feel for. Those Strongsville residents who are directly affected by this thoughtless act because they will lose their quality of life and even their homes have no representation because their leaders have launched a narrative of 'the greater good'. When pressed on this legislation their leadership has told them essentially 'sorry for your luck'. These poor residents have come to our City Council meetings in tears, because they have been abandoned by the very people who are supposed to represent their best interests.

Finally, I would like to speak for a moment on the study that Strongsville partially funded with money from NOACA as well. The study that was going to show all of us in Brunswick, those

unrepresented residents of Strongsville, all of you here in Columbus that this interchange being forced upon our smaller municipality was truly for the greater good. The new interchange was going to alleviate the traffic issues Strongsville imposed on themselves with poor urban planning at Route 82 and I-71. So, what did their own study show the effects of a new interchange at Boston Road would do for safety in that 82 corridor? Minimal to no effect on safety. So, I ask this esteemed Committee this question. Why are we here? Why are we wasting taxpayer money on this boondoggle? I respectfully request the consideration of the passage of House Bill 276 so that we may move forward as a city without the looming threat of forced interchanges in the future.

Thank you,

Brandon Lambert

Brunswick City Councilman

Ward 3