

October 12, 2023

Hello Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Michelle Maitland. I am the daughter of Bruce Maitland at 16030 Boston Road. I am strongly supportive of HB 276.

I am writing to you today with an urgent plea to support HB 276 on behalf of the concerned and passionate citizens of Strongsville and Brunswick. Our community's well-being hangs in the balance, and we need your support to preserve and protect what we hold dear.

In 1975, my father poured his heart and soul into building our family home at 16030 Boston Road. He sacrificed his car and, with the help of loved ones, constructed the very foundation of our lives: our home. He is now 82 years old, a retired bricklayer, and has spent the last 48 years within these walls. This is his legacy, and passing it along to the next generation is something he holds dear. But now, with the looming threat of the interchange, his legacy and the fabric of our community are at risk. Our neighborhood is vibrant, filled with families, children, and retirees. It is a place that has become an integral part of who we are. We believe that the proposed interchange is nothing more than an attempt by Strongsville to provide alternate access to its industrial park, reaping all the tax revenue while forcing Brunswick to shoulder the cost. This is an injustice. If Brunswick is made to bear any portion of the construction, maintenance, and provision of safety forces, it will undoubtedly impact our quality of life, making Brunswick a less desirable place to call home.

The truth is, Strongsville's own traffic study shows that a new interchange is not justified based on data and science. It will not relieve traffic on Ohio State Routes 82 or 303 at their respective interchanges with I-71. This is a clear indication that the proposed project is driven by motives that are not in the best interests of our communities. We cannot ignore this injustice.

Furthermore, the State legislative process has been manipulated to serve a narrow interest, overshadowing the executive functions of the State government that have been honed over years of education, experience, data, and science. This manipulation must be overturned. Our fellow citizens should not lose their homes and way of life for the sake of an ill-conceived project.

The project also calls for the relocation of the jet fuel and gas pipelines that run along Boston Road, raising concerns about the potential for an ecological disaster. The use of Eminent Domain to acquire homes adds yet another layer of distress, as we face the destruction of our community and the displacement of our loved ones. Recent studies have revealed that the benefits of a Boston Road interchange are minimal at best, highlighting the inequitable motives behind this project.

We cannot sacrifice the well-being and safety of our community for the sake of convenience or political ambitions. It sets a dangerous precedent that disregards the expert opinions and more suitable alternatives at hand. Our neighborhood is not just a collection of houses; it is a thriving community with a shared identity and a story worth preserving. HB 276 provides an opportunity to reassess the impact of the interchange and ensure that the concerns of the affected residents are genuinely heard and taken into account. By supporting this bill, you hold the power to preserve the sanctity and integrity of our neighborhood while setting a positive example for future decision-making processes.

Thank you for taking the time to listen and consider our plea. I ask that you take my testimony into consideration and support HB 276. By acting in the best interests of the residents of Strongsville and Brunswick, you can ensure a brighter and more secure future for our community. We are counting on your support.

Sincerely,

Michelle Maitland and Bruce Maitland

Passionate Strongsville Residents