

Ohio House of Representatives - Economic and Workforce Development Committee  
Written Testimony of Michael J. Abella Jr. – Council Representative Ward 1, City of Brunswick, OH  
October 15, 2023

Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the consideration of this written testimony. My name is Michael J. Abella Jr., and I am the Ward 1 Council Representative in the City of Brunswick, OH. I live in and represent the neighborhoods located directly on and off of Boston Road (the area of the proposed interchange). I am writing in strong support of the passage of House Bill 276, as introduced by Representative Ray and Representative Miller. We are thankful for all the hard work and persistence of Representative Ray and Representative Miller. Without all their help and support, our voice in opposition to the Interchange Provision placed in House Bill 23 would not be heard.

House Bill 23 created Ohio Revised Code (ORC 5501.60) that requires that a new highway interchange be forced into communities every 4.5 miles when certain conditions are met. This provision was created solely for the creation of an interchange off of Boston Road in Brunswick. Earlier efforts to put an interchange in the neighboring city of Strongsville have failed due to residential opposition. The push to help eliminate Strongsville-created traffic was then forced onto the city of Brunswick in H.B. 23, creating a devastating effect on our residents and the financial future of the city of Brunswick. There was no prior discussion between Strongsville and Brunswick city officials on the H.B. 23 Interchange Provision as Brunswick has knowingly opposed any such interchange for well over a decade. This is a residential area with a mix of older and newer homes. This proposed interchange will offer nothing to the residents in the area but loss of home, loss of property, devaluation of home and property, noise, commercial clutter, and the known possibility of increased crime. The Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation recently stated that the Strongsville study to put an interchange on Boston Road does not show evidence of reducing congestion or lowering the frequency of crashes. The creation of an interchange on Boston Road would also force the movement and relocation of several hundred feet of a jet fuel pipeline, in many cases pushing the pipeline even closer to residential homes on Boston Road. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is part of the US Department of Transportation and administers a national regulatory safety program for the approximately 3.3 million miles of interstate and intrastate pipelines in the United States. The PHMSA has a provision stating that no pipeline be located closer than 50 feet from a residential dwelling. Many of the homes on Boston Road currently have the pipeline located right at 50 feet from their homes – the expansion of Boston Road needed to create the proposed interchange would push the pipeline even closer, creating a possible dangerous situation. The incident that occurred in East Palestine earlier this year reminds us of how serious the transport of liquid hazardous materials can be. The residents of Boston Road and surrounding neighbors live in fear knowing that there is a possibility of that pipeline being moved in the future due to the interstate.

On behalf of the City of Brunswick, and the family, friends, neighbors, and residents I represent, I request that you support HB 276, which would repeal the interchange requirement in ORC 5501.60. This proposed interchange does not help with traffic and safety, and the longer the interchange provision stays in the original bill, the longer the pain and suffering of surrounding residents continues. Everyday these residents wake up not knowing if they will be living in their homes in the future – they don't know if they can sell or even improve their homes. It's a tough way to live. Your actions to support HB 276 will put an end to this and allow these residents to live normal lives again. Thank You.