

Eric Keckler

City of Fostoria, Safety Service Director

SB119 Testimony

May 1, 2024

Chairman Kick, Vice-Chairman Lear, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

Good morning. I am Eric Keckler, the Safety Service Director and the former Mayor of the City of Fostoria. I appreciate your time this morning and your attention to this ongoing issue and concern we have within the City of Fostoria and throughout Seneca County. I am here today as a proponent of Senate Bill 119, which will bring needed reforms to our state and local landfill operations, particularly the influx of out of state waste.

First and foremost, I want it stated on record that, despite comments made otherwise, we are **NOT** attempting to shut down the landfill operated by WIN Waste of Seneca County. This landfill provides a necessary service for waste-disposal, and they employ around 100 individuals in Seneca County and subsequently support multiple small businesses. And while we certainly support economic development, there comes a point when you must look at the long-term ramifications and the potential burdens we are placing on future generations if this bill is not enacted.

We have seen the negative economic impacts that the landfill has had in our county, and therefore we cannot let it continue to expand. We must have additional oversight. Some examples of these negative impacts are:

Property Demand: Potential buyers have been deterred by the smell, noise, and visual blight associated with the landfill, leading to decreased demand for properties nearby. We, as a state, are suffering from a major housing shortage, and we cannot afford to lose residential development opportunities because of issues like this, that we can control.

Job Losses in Other Sectors: In some cases, the presence of the landfill can deter potential employers from investing in the area, particularly in industries that rely on clean environments or have an image to maintain. This can lead to a loss of job opportunities in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and

manufacturing. Ohio continues to be a leader in economic development, and we cannot afford to deter certain sectors from investing in our state.

Hinderance of Future Economic Development: It is important to note that the land being used by the landfill is not viable for future economic development. Land is a commodity that we cannot regenerate. We must work together now to mitigate the long-term impacts, and this legislation provides us with an opportunity to be proactive now as opposed to reactive in the future.

Today, I urge the committee to vote on advancing this legislation to the floor for a decisive vote. Ohio has long been hailed as 'the heart of it all.' Yet, what occurs when this heart is tainted by the influx of out-of-state waste we accumulate annually? I implore you to grant us the chance to take control of our fate, enabling us to persist in fostering the ongoing positive growth and advancement of Ohio.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Keckler