



Ohio Senate
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-8049 Office
Bill.Reineke@ohiosenate.gov

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Bill Reineke
State Senator
26th District
May 16, 2023

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, Senator Wilkin, and Senator O'Brien, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 119 today.

During my tenure in the state legislature, I have been confronted with an issue I never anticipated: trash.

So let's talk trash!

My constituents in Fostoria and Seneca County have struggled with out of state trash, mostly from New York, coming into their home for years. Most of this has happened without meaningful oversight, causing my constituents to worry about the effects on the air they breathe, the water they drink, and their overall quality of life. This struggle also affects all of us; no one wants a lack of oversight over the waste brought in our state—or even thinks about it. In the wake of us showing our economic strength with new development booming in our communities, we certainly do not want to be known as the “Trash State” too. Do we want to be known as a net importer of trash or as the trash depot center of the East Coast?

Senate Bill 119 confronts this issue for all my constituents and for all Ohioans. After learning from the people of Fostoria and from local leaders, this bill takes a three-pronged approach to solving our trash problem:

1. Applications for a license or permit for a new solid waste facility or an expansion of a facility has to serve the public benefit, convenience, and necessity. This provides locals with a voice and an impact in landfill decisions that are made in their communities, which the people of Fostoria have felt has been lacking for years. For many years, local voices have been ignored in landfill decisions – local impacts make a difference. This is my constituents' home, and outside groups coming in are trying to dictate what happens in their community. Now, the Director of the EPA or the board of health have to consider community voices for these decisions.
2. Fees on solid waste and construction and demolition debris (C&DD) have not been updated in years. Agencies that have oversight on landfills must have the correct funding to ensure the job is done correctly and to provide the public with that confidence. Senate

Bill 119 increases and equalizes the state solid waste disposal fee, the district disposal fees, and the state C&DD fees to \$7.50 per ton. The fees would be distributed proportionally to the funds already in code and a new fund proposed by EPA using the distribution in HB 33—the Governor's budget proposal. We established \$7.50 as a baseline by having LSC do inflation indexing work on these fees. That research was provided to the Chair's office.

In addition to the increase, the bill establishes the local landfill oversight fund in the State Treasury with an additional \$1 per ton fee going toward it. Money in the fund will be distributed by the EPA director at the beginning of each fiscal year to each board of health on their approved list that enforces solid waste law. The money is distributed in proportionate amounts to each board of health based off the amount of waste disposed of in the solid waste management district the board of health is located in. Health boards will use the funds for solid waste law enforcement.

By doing this, we will be providing better funding to the agencies regulating these landfills while also equalizing the fees for all types of trash no matter where it comes from—Ohio or out-of-state. The bill also changes the idea that construction debris is less trash than other trash.

3. Senate Bill 119 will also help our local health districts. Under the bill, a board of county commissioners of a county that generated more than 75% of the annual revenue of a Joint Solid Waste Management District can leave that district and establish their own solid waste management district by adopting a resolution. By doing this, the county that actually has such revenue, likely due to having a large landfill, can prioritize and provide adequate oversight of said landfill. Currently, there is no exit strategy for a county to get out of a solid waste district if the other counties veto them. Again, this is about ensuring constituent confidence in the regulations of landfills that exist in their backyards.

Senate Bill 119 is a direct response to my constituents and community leaders who are tired of being unheard and who have drastic concerns for their health and quality of life. It is also a proactive approach to ensuring that Ohio does not continue to become a trash can for the East Coast.

The State of Ohio has been very forward in inviting new businesses to our state. I applaud all of those efforts, however, with those great innovations and technological changes coming, we also need to be on top of our trash situation. Ohio is also the destination for trash because of our reluctance to recognize exactly the need to be doing more with recycling. With local oversight, our constituents need to be assured that the air we breathe and the water we drink are clean and that the contents of trains coming through our state are adequately monitored.

This issue from my locals is complicated and will need all of the above provisions to provide for the safety and health of my constituents and others throughout the state affected by this silent enemy.

Thank you, Chair, and I welcome any questions from the committee.