

## **TESTIMONY OF DR. CLAY WOLPH**

Good afternoon, Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, ranking member Hicks-Hudson, and the members of the Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Dr. Clay Wolph. I am here today to support SB 119 and to thank Senator Reineke for his work on the bill. I currently serve as President of the Seneca County Board of Health – although I am not speaking today in my official capacity and am not speaking on behalf of the Board of Health. As an Ohioan, a lifelong Fostoria resident, a doctor, a father, and a business owner in Seneca County, I feel compelled to speak out on behalf of the community that has been so negatively affected by problems related to out of state waste shipped into the county by rail. This problem not only affects my community, but communities all across Ohio.

Currently a landfill in our small town is receiving over 2 million tons of waste per year, the majority of which is from out of state. The landfill will receive 3.2 million tons of waste per year if an expansion sought by the landfill is approved. The landfill has illegally released large quantities of hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide gases from rotting wastes into the air, resulting in noxious odors that have forced children to restrict their outdoor activities. The landfill's violations of the air pollution laws and water pollution laws have resulted in a number of court orders in attempts to address the landfill's unlawful conduct.

The problems I speak of are not unique to Seneca County. These problems exist across the entire State of Ohio. These landfills have a negative socioeconomic impact both currently and will for many generations to come. Ohioans are harmed by the negative stigma, the constant risks of fire and derailments, and the risk of harmful toxins entering our state and our communities in leaking, unlined and uncovered railcars from the East Coast every single day. Our soil, air, and water, and most importantly, the health of our citizens, are at risk. Lake Erie is at risk of contamination from our rivers being polluted by out of state waste. Numerous communities are losing businesses, seeing reduced property values, experiencing a diminished quality of life, and incurring added health expenses.

Other states are passing legislation to stop the building of new landfills in their states. Their solution is to ship their waste out and dump it in Ohio, where low and outdated disposal fees enable them to increase their profits. We cannot continue to be the East Coast's dumping ground for contaminated soil and other harmful wastes that can pose health risks and can ultimately lead to massive cleanup costs in the future if the liners eventually leak and contaminate the groundwater.

This bill will help the state to protect against this environmental disaster that looms over our state. The low disposal fees, and obstacles to local control and public input, have all contributed to the situation. This legislation will provide the state and local governments with added revenue to detect and protect all

Ohioans from the environmental threats posed by wastes generated inside and outside of Ohio.

As expanding landfills swallow up valuable farmland, they reduce the value of surrounding properties and impair the lives of nearby residents. Neighboring homeowners have no other recourse than to sell their homes to the landfills, thus perpetuating the landfills' expansion into and damage to their communities. Trash mountains continue to expand to over 500 acres in just our town alone. It needs to stop. We must protect our air, soil, and water for current and future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this very important matter that Ohio is facing. Please support SB 119 and thank you so much for your time.

Dr. Clay Wolph

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