

May 30, 2023

Honorable Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, Senator Wilkin, and Senator O'Brien, and all members of the Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee,

Good Evening,

My name is Ashley Stahl. I am here in support of Senate Bill 119.

Almost 10 years ago, my husband and I moved into our first home and started our family. We have four kids, ages 8 to 2. Our house is located about one mile from the dump. We were a little skeptical at first about buying this house because of this but were assured by others in the area that it's not been a huge problem.

Living next to the landfill has given us more problems in the last 4-5 years than we ever anticipated, or feel we deserve. We are just a young family trying to raise our kids and it's now snowballed into an everyday fight for our right to quality of life. I've often heard Brian Eziak say he would never live next to a landfill, in fact he has told me that directly, and I completely understand why because of the issues we face with the landfill that he is the Vice President for. I must wonder though, WHY he wouldn't if it's so "SAFE" and "WELL MAINTAINED" like they say.

The smells have been obnoxious at best over the years we've been here. While the hydrogen sulfide has undoubtedly improved—I worry now about the other harmful gases that are created when burning off the hydrogen sulfide. Sulfur dioxide is one of these harmful chemicals produced and currently there are not as many efforts in measuring and protecting the residents from that. My kids play outside nearly everyday as soon as it starts to warm up. There have been countless days that we've been driven back inside due to the overpowering smell of the dump. I've researched that long term exposure to Sulfur dioxide can lead to things like changes in lung function, decreased fertility in women, loss of smell, and the list goes on. I don't want that for my children.

On top of the smell, we also have trash in our yard often. Our road is a common route for trash trucks so between trash falling out of the trucks, our road is just constantly busy with this truck traffic all day. We have mornings where we are woken around 5:30 to the sound of machinery slamming at the landfill as they go over hills or empty their load. The train traffic is also a nuisance as the main routes we take are oftentimes blocked while they switch out train cars, causing us to have to take a country block around-if we are lucky that crossing is open as well. Overall, the landfill is just unsightly. At any given time, you can see tons of train cars sitting packed full of trash. Any fencerow, body of water, or ditch in the area is always peppered with trash. I run our road often during the summer and the amount of trash that I notice on the sides of the road and even in the middle of the road, that is there for months at a time is just a disgrace to our community. These things are huge problems, but the weight that bears so heavily on my heart is our water.

Around 2018-2019, we started experiencing problems with our water. At first, we thought it was our appliances or old piping in the house, but after eliminating possible causes one by one, we came to the horrible realization that our water was the problem. Fearing the very water in your home is something nobody should ever have to deal with. This led me down a path of a lot of late night researching after my kids went to bed. I ended up finding out that the first hill of the landfill is not properly lined at all, there is no synthetic liner. And I've also found out that there have been leachate leaks as well as their

most recent violation of compromising the liner which happened just earlier this year. This has left me even more of a nervous wreck for my family & neighbors.

We have had water testing done privately prior to knowing that our local health department does it routinely for people that live closer to the landfill (a fact that is not just commonly broadcast to our area). Our initial testing that we paid for ourselves was done in September 2022. The health department then did more testing in December. What values I could compare had only increased in those couple of months. After receiving our first water results, we were told not to drink the water. The testing by the health department did not bear the same warning. Values were high, but we were told that's because they are just "naturally occurring" and that was supposed to put our minds at ease. But it did not. To my knowledge, no impact study has ever been done prior to the landfill, so how can we truly claim anything is naturally occurring for this area when we don't have a baseline to compare to?

We did have a water system installed when we first moved here so we are allowed to drink from the reverse osmosis, but that only covers one faucet. As I said previously, we have 4 kids. Do you know how hard it is to keep kids from just drinking out of the sink in the bathroom when brushing teeth, or drinking the bath water while they are playing or even just getting a drink out of the hose when we are playing outside like I did when I was younger? It's next to impossible and I worry everyday about the damage being done to my family. My kids' whole entire lives have been spent drinking/bathing in this water. I asked Brian if he would drink the water and he said "absolutely not" because it smells bad. I truly feel that a business like this, with the reputation of violating the current standards and needing to operate under consent orders, should be considered the culprit of anything out of the ordinary until proven it's not the cause. Why do we just have to settle with the answer of "naturally occurring" when there is this business bringing in trash from out of state with very minimal oversight, and not operating at the highest of the high regulations? I've spoken with the Ohio EPA a couple of times and have been very disappointed in the little efforts being made to prevent any problems for the residents. Do we really need to wait until many of us start becoming seriously ill before action is taken while the landfill brings in millions of dollars in profit? That just doesn't seem logical or fair to me. The fact that I must spend my evenings researching and writing emails to our local health department, commissioners, and EPA is absurd to me.

I also want to note that I attended a Board of Health meeting in December of 2022 where the Health Department had said that they tried to take a random water sample for the wetlands of the landfill and were turned down. They were working on rescheduling at the time. Why couldn't a random sample be taken? Why does every sample taken have to be scheduled ahead of time so there is time to prepare? Things like this just only confirm my fears that shady business could be happening. I'm not saying that it is for certain, but it's surely not a good look. We have NO trust in the landfill after all the lies being told. They will come to Board of Health meetings and say that this is the most well-maintained landfill in the area. I'm sorry, I didn't realize that trash not fully covered on the hill, trash in the fields & ditches and leachate leaks were considered well maintained. To me, it seems logical that the landfill would welcome more oversight and preventative measures if they are so well maintained like they claim, however, we have recently been aware to the fact that they are trying to remove the local health department as a regulating authority because they are starting to look into issues on a deeper level and hold the landfill more accountable as of late. The landfill could work on regaining our trust if they would openly allow for more transparency and oversight.

I will end with this; I don't want to see the landfill shut down because I'm aware that action will not help our current issues. However, I would like to see the out of state trash to a minimum or stop altogether as well as more of the fees from the landfill to be allocated locally to help with more preventative measures and oversight. I feel this bill as proposed would allow for such opportunities and I genuinely thank Senator Reineke for his efforts on behalf of my family and me. I encourage the committee's support for this bill to help protect the future of my family. Thank you.

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