

Good Afternoon Chair Shaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and the members of the Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Don Mennel, and I am a Fostoria City Council Member. I am the Chairman Emeritus of The Mennel Milling Company and a former trustee of Heidelberg University, Fostoria Community Hospital, ProMedica Health System, Saint Wendelin Schools Foundation, and the Geary Family YMCA. I also served as the director for The Andersons Inc. (NASDAQ- ANDERSONS), The Mennel Million Company, and Sutton Bank. I am currently running for the City of Fostoria Mayor position.

I am here today to provide support for the Amended Senate Bill 119. I would specifically like to discuss about the solid waste districts in Ohio and the challenge for multi-county districts to pursue their own single-county district. As you are aware, Fostoria is part of the Ottawa, Sandusky, and Seneca County Solid Waste District. Fostoria is also the home of the Sunny Farms Landfill, one of the largest landfills in Ohio and top three landfills in Ohio regarding the tonnage received from out-of-state. Solid waste districts are tasked with two major responsibilities: 1) recycle and provide education regarding recycling and 2) inspect and monitor the landfill. Currently, Fostoria has no recycling program. The city where the landfill is located has no recycling program! Other cities within the three-county district benefit from recycling, while the city where the landfill is located has none. City of Fostoria and its residents have no say and cannot control or influence the decisions of the solid waste district board. As I said earlier, the district is made out of three counties. One county (Ottawa) has a very small landfill. The other county in the district (Sandusky) has no landfill. Our county (Seneca) had the massive landfill that accepts approximately 98% of its waste from out-of-state. Our county (Seneca) also generates approximately 85% of the solid waste district's budget. Our county (Seneca) has the least amount of recycling programs or funds invested back into recycling programs. And the city with the landfill, has no recycling program. The Ottawa- Sandusky- Seneca Solid Waste District promised a recycling program in the City of Fostoria only after the council refused to sign their management plan. We are now in the early stages of discussion with the solid waste district regarding a recycling program.

Regardless of Seneca County's wants and needs, even if we provide 85% of the solid waste district's budget, we are unnumbered in the votes by the other two counties. The county that has no landfill, and doesn't contribute to the district's budget, has the same authority as we do in Seneca County.

Under the current Ohio law, Seneca County has no exit plan if we chose to create or explore creating our own solid waste district. This goes against the Ohio's principle of being a home rule state. Seneca County, and all counties in Ohio, shall have home rule authority regarding multi-county political subdivisions or districts. Home rule powers should be granted to all counties, including the power of self-government. You should not block Seneca County from exploring its own solid waste district if that is in the best of its citizens. You should ensure that this is an allowable alternative for all counties in Ohio.

Amended Senate Bill 119 gives the opportunity for counties to explore, if desired, their own solid waste district. Therefore, I am asking you to support the Amended Senate Bill 119 introduced by Senator Bill Reineke. Thank you!