

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the transportation committee:

As a concerned citizen and a proud lifelong resident of Strongsville, I am writing to you today to passionately implore you to carefully consider and extend your support for SB 155. It is crucial for the preservation and well-being of our beloved community.

Allow me to share a personal story that underscores the significance of our request. In 1975, my father invested his heart and soul into building our family home at 16030 Boston Road. He sold his car to purchase the property and, with the assistance of family and friends, constructed a home where countless memories were created. Our neighborhood, filled with families, children, and retirees, has become an integral part of our lives.

However, it is disheartening to witness the rush to judgment that has taken place, fueled by flawed science and followed by potentially disastrous policy-making. Back in March, a Strongsville State Representative introduced new language in the transportation budget, mandating the construction of an interchange every 4.5 miles between major cities. This abuse of power ignores the desires of local residents and overrides the system, dictating that the interchange be completed through the law. Such hasty implementation and disregard for thorough consideration pose significant risks to our environment and the livelihoods of those residing near the interchange.

The project requires relocating the jet fuel and gas pipeline that runs along Boston Road, a maneuver with concerning potential for ecological damage. Shifting the jet fuel and gas pipelines could cause an environmental disaster. The use of Eminent Domain to acquire homes is another alarming prospect. For pennies on the dollar for our homes, where are we supposed to go in this economy? My father is 82 years old and on a fixed income. He is also battling pancreatic cancer. He saved his whole life for this retirement and the interchange will pull the rug out from under him. So many families along this road are in the same position: INVESTED. Fighting battles that no one knows about and now to learn that our homes are in jeopardy is just incredibly heartbreaking.

Recent studies have objectively highlighted the minimal benefits of a Boston Road interchange, NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT on the traffic at Rte. 82 and Howe Road. This data clearly illustrates the inequitable nature of the proposed project and raises questions about its true motives. We must avoid allowing financial interests to overshadow decisions that negatively impact our community.

Additionally, the potential destruction of homes and the disruption of lives caused by this interchange should not be overlooked. Ignoring expert opinions suggesting more suitable alternatives sets a concerning precedent for future decision-making processes. Our community's well-being and safety should take priority over mere convenience or political ambitions.

Our neighborhood represents more than just a collection of houses; it is a thriving community with a shared identity. The proposed interchange project threatens to overshadow this identity, eroding the fabric of our neighborhood. Therefore, I implore you to consider the collective voice and the collective story of our community. We are fighting for our homes. We are fighting for the homes of our neighbors. We are fighting for the state of our neighborhood. We are fighting for the safety of our children. We are fighting for what is right.

Supporting SB 155 will provide an opportunity to halt the implementation of this ill-conceived project and allow experts in the field to propose fair and equitable alternatives. By passing this bill, you can play a pivotal role in preserving our neighborhood's sanctity and integrity while setting a positive precedent for future decision-making processes.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of our community's concerns. By acting in the best interests of Strongsville and Brunswick residents, you hold the power to preserve our neighborhood, maintain its integrity, and ensure a brighter future for our community.

I look forward to witnessing your steadfast commitment to serving our community's best interests.

Michelle Maitland  
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