

Written testimony

Chair Stephanie Kunze, Vice Chair Bill Reineke, Ranking Member Nickie Antonio and members of the Transportation Committee

Thank you for your consideration of my written testimony. My name is Theresa Bassett. I am a lifelong Ohio resident and have lived in my Brunswick home for 46 years. I am writing in strong support of SB 155.

My late husband and I built our home near Boston Road in 1977. The area was wide open and developments were just starting. It was a great place to raise a family. We had a small park with tennis courts and a playground, manicured lawns and friendly neighbors. In 1984 we were settled and our second child had just arrived. NOACA started looking for places where interchanges could be built and the first of many studies was done.

In 1990, 1995 and 1999 NOACA and ODOT ran further studies. By this time my husband was terminally ill, my oldest son was in college, and my youngest son was at Brunswick High School. The project was tabled. There had always been problems, design problems, pipelines, wildlife concerns and lack of funding getting in the way of this interchange going forward. We thought at this time that would be the end of the interchange. Not so. Like a boomerang it came back. We didn't understand why Strongsville was so determined to use this location.

Until, in 2013 a Strongsville Council Member was quoted in the Post newspaper saying "The whole point of the Boston Road interchange is to connect it to the industrial parkway." In 2013 Strongsville received a 215,000 dollar grant for the extension of Foltz Parkway. In 2014 they applied for a 4-million-dollar Federal grant to help pay for the extension of Foltz Parkway, and they applied for permits from the Army Corps of Engineers to relocate wetlands in the area of Foltz Parkway.

The mall was built, a Cleveland Clinic facility and a Big Costco were all added to the Rt 82 area, increasing the traffic congestion. In 2017 the Strongsville State Representative proposed new guidelines for developing interchanges. He had ORC 5501.60 added to the 2018- 2019 transportation budget. When the transportation budget was presented to the former Governor for his signature, he used his line-item veto to remove it before signing it.

In 2018 Strongsville considered building a slip ramp at Howe and Shurmer roads. The voters voted it down. Now, what we heard was the interchange at Boston Road was needed to help with traffic congestion and safety at Routes 82 and 303.

In 2021 NOACA developed new guidelines for deciding which road projects will move forward. At that time **NOACA recommended AGAINST developing an interchange at Boston Road and I-71**. In September 2022 Strongsville contracted with Euthenics, a Strongsville company to do a feasibility study on the interchange at Boston Road. This was to solve the traffic problems at Route 82 and Route 303. In March 2023, the Strongsville State Representative placed ORC 5501.60 into the budget bill again. It passed and our present Governor signed it into law, along with the funding to make this happen.

The reason given by the Strongsville State Representative was that this interchange was needed, to decrease traffic concerns at Route 82 and Route 303. The Strongsville feasibility study for this project which was released earlier this year **admitted that the interchange in this area would do little to alleviate the traffic concerns at Route 82 or Route 303**. Strongsville has created the traffic problems at Route 82 by overdevelopment of the area. Brunswick should not have to pay for the solution to their traffic problems. Brunswick should not have to bear the burden of paying for the cost of increased snow removal and police protection on Boston Road. We will not receive any financial benefit from this interchange.

I find it difficult to believe that the main focus of Strongsville is the traffic concerns at Route 82 or Route 303, when they have spent so much time and energy trying to develop a pathway to Foltz Parkway. The Euthenics study only focused on a Boston Road solution. It did not look at any other solutions within Strongsville to fix the problem, even though other sites within their own city are better suited. They have straight flat roads that end at the Foltz Parkway

I am now a senior citizen, living on Social Security. There have been 19 studies done that have all said that Boston Road is NOT the solution. Living with the uncertainty over the years has been very stressful. My property value has gone down since the announcement of the interchange, making it difficult to get enough money from a sale to relocate. No one wants to live right next-door freeway interchange. I would like to stay in my quiet neighborhood without worrying about semi-trucks going through the development. The added traffic,

increased pollution and commercial development that goes along with having an interchange should not be placed in a residential neighborhood.

This project should not go forward.

As a Brunswick resident I am upset that this legislation was passed into Ohio law without the input of Brunswick or Medina County residents or officials. It did not follow the regular protocol of letting the highway experts decide if the interchange should be built.

By passing SB 155 you will be correcting a mistake that was made when ORC 5501.60 was inserted into HB 23. Larger cities should not be allowed to force their will on smaller cities and counties. This is governmental overreach at its worst! This provision, ORC 5501.60 needs to be removed from the Revised Code and corrected permanently, so other citizens do not have to live under the ongoing threat of having their homes destroyed.

Thank you.

Theresa A. Bassett

Brunswick officials and residents were not informed or consulted about this project. We were not given the opportunity to discuss, plan or vote on a project

