

Testimony in Support of SB 155

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the transportation committee, thank you for allowing me to submit a written testimonial for SB 155. My name is Cynthia Wargo. I've been a resident of Brunswick for 30 years and reside in the southern part of the city. I am strongly supportive of SB 155 which seeks to repeal section 5501.60 of the Revised Code to remove the requirement that the Department of Transportation construct certain interstate interchanges.

I ask that you repeal section 5501.60 because the way this code was inserted in the transportation bill is undemocratic, would cause irreparable harm to our City (Brunswick) and would set a terrible precedent for other communities if allowed to be implemented. The Strongsville State Representative inserted this language in the bill without the knowledge or support of Brunswick council. All parties impacted by a potential interchange should be involved in the planning, not forced to comply without any input. Section 5501.60 bypasses all the standard procedures for deciding whether an interchange is appropriate and if warranted, determining the best location. In my opinion, Section 5501.60 is a serious overstep of the legislatures' responsibilities.

Strongsville has traffic problems on Route 82 because they overdeveloped their city and now, they are trying to force an interchange on Brunswick which is located in an adjacent county. It makes no sense that a city in Cuyahoga County can force an interchange on another city in Medina County.

In addition, although Strongsville has stated that Brunswick is the cause for their traffic problems, the recently completed traffic study indicated Brunswick residents are not a major driver of the traffic on Route 82. In fact, the study demonstrates that building an interchange on Boston Road will not significantly alleviate traffic on either Route 82 or Rt 303. So, what was Strongsville's real intent to force an interchange on Boston Road?

I believe the City of Strongsville proposed this section of the code so their heavy truck traffic would be diverted south making it easier for trucks to access their industrial development. Unfortunately, diverting truck traffic to your southern neighbor and having them be responsible for half of it might be in Strongsville's best interest, but it would be disastrous for Brunswick and the surrounding communities. Brunswick would be responsible for maintaining Boston Road for heavy truck traffic going to Strongsville. It would essentially make a residential area another commercial corridor. Strongsville's own residents voted down an offramp to Howe Road located just south of Rt. 82 because they didn't want their neighborhoods destroyed by an interchange. Section 5501.60 forces what was unpopular to Strongsville residents on their neighbors to the south without their knowledge or consent.

Finally, study after study has shown that adding more interchanges does not alleviate traffic problems, long term. In fact, due to induced demand, the traffic in the area will skyrocket after a few years because additional development will occur in the surrounding communities (i.e., Brunswick Hills, Valley City, North Royalton, and Hinckley). Several years ago, I heard a startling statistic that northeast Ohio has roughly the same population we had in 1950. However, we are now using two times the landmass. This unchecked growth must stop. We desperately need regional planning, not an underhanded code that if not removed will cost people's their homes, reduce home values, make our city less safe and increase our taxes because Brunswick will have to pay for increased safety forces, fire, and road maintenance/widening. It will destroy the character of our City, and turn it into a drive through community.

I ask that you take my testimony into consideration and support Senate Bill 155 which seeks to repeal section 5501.60 of the Revised Code to remove the requirement that the Department of Transportation construct certain interstate interchanges. The code was inserted in bad faith and should be removed. If allowed to stand, a terrible precedent will be set which would allow larger cities to mandate interchanges and/or other infrastructure on smaller cities. Thank you!

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