

To: Chairman Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and Members of the House Community Revitalization Committee
From: Mike Cool, Fostoria
Subject: SB 147 Proponent Testimony, May 20, 2025

Chairman Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and Members of the House Community Revitalization Committee:

My name is Mike Cool, and I am a retired teacher, coach, and principal, and I am asking you to please support Senate Bill 147. My wife, Rhonda Cool, and I love Fostoria. I spent over 40 years of my life there. But on March 26, four trucks rolled into my driveway in Fostoria, loaded up a lifetime of belongings, and moved us to Tiffin. Leaving the home and the people we love was a heart-wrenching decision. We had planned to remain in Fostoria the rest of our lives, but there was one thing – and only one thing – that forced our decision to move: the WIN Waste of Seneca County landfill.

I have been part of the fight to help our county gain local oversight for years. I have testified at the Statehouse, and I have testified before the Ohio EPA. I have attended countless meetings at the local, county, and state levels, and I have walked away with one conclusion: the people who are directly affected by the landfill have no voice.

I am asking you to please give us our voice back. You are the only ones with the power to do that. Please let me explain why we need your help.

In my forty years in this area, I have never witnessed anything quite like the repulsive stench that continually emanates from the WIN Waste landfill. This company's lack of care and concern for our health, including the smell, is unacceptable.

Rhonda had our well tested, and we found those results are not good. The well report showed our water has elevated rates of lithium, lead, uranium, nickel, boron, and sulfate. These substances can have adverse physical and mental effects on adults and children. My wife and I have been so concerned about the quality of our well water that, like many people living near the landfill, we have been hauling our drinking water to our home for years.

While we cannot at this time prove that the contaminants in the water come from the landfill, the unknown is terrifying. We live every day not knowing if the air we breathe and the water we shower in is harming our bodies and our minds. We can't know because the Seneca County Health Department doesn't have the funds to provide sufficient oversight, and they are limited in what they can do with the funds they do have.

Senate Bill 147 can bring the change our county needs to protect our citizens from potential harm from the landfill. The bill will free the health department to use funds to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

When my wife and I moved away from Fostoria, the city lost two of its greatest supporters. We left behind a community full of people we care about, but we felt we had no choice but to relocate. We are now in our seventies, and we couldn't deal with the smell and the stress any longer. There are thousands of people still living in Fostoria who need your help. Please support Senate Bill 147 so Fostoria has a chance to return to what it once was, a place I loved to call home.