

## Testimony for Community Revitalization — SB 147

May 20, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify many points of misinformation regarding the WIN Waste Seneca County landfill and testify in opposition to SB147. WIN Waste Innovations owns and operates three facilities in Ohio, collectively supporting hundreds of jobs and generating millions of dollars in economic activity in the regions we serve.

Roughly six years ago, WIN acquired the former Sunny Farms Landfill, now operating as WIN Waste Innovations of Seneca County Landfill. From the outset, we recognized the site's significant challenges and committed ourselves to transforming it into a model of environmental responsibility and transparency. Since then, we have invested well over one hundred million dollars in advanced technology, personnel, and infrastructure. Today, the site stands among the most technologically advanced landfills in the United States, evidenced by the hundreds of inspections conducted by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency over the last year without any outstanding violations.

While we respect the right of all individuals to express their concerns or disdain about living near industrial businesses, we request that our shared public servants review policy with only facts in mind.

WIN Waste would like to provide the committee with several undisputed facts that address concerns raised regarding our facility:

- Fact: No medical professional has ever linked illness or disease to the WIN Waste Seneca landfill.
- Fact: The Seneca County General Health District and the Ohio EPA maintain substantial scientific and empirical data confirming no groundwater contamination or impact on private wells.
- Fact: Even under previous ownership, when odor issues were more prevalent, the landfill never violated any health-based environmental standards set by the State of Ohio or the federal government.
- Fact: There has never been a single instance of leachate backing up into homes. All contact water is properly collected and treated at certified wastewater facilities.
- Fact: Our site operates in substantial compliance, as deemed by the OPEA, with all environmental laws and regulations, regardless of any consent order.
- Fact: Over the past 18 months, the landfill has been inspected 392 times by local and state officials, including the Ohio EPA. These inspections have resulted in zero enforcement

actions—a clear indication of our consistent compliance and operational excellence. In 79 of those inspections, the Seneca County Health Department was present and actively reviewing the site, as well. Some have said that this landfill needs more oversight however, this landfill is one of the most technologically advanced landfills in the country, and yet, is inspected more than any other landfill in the State of Ohio.

- Fact: As recently as May 14<sup>th</sup>, the OEPA and the Seneca County Health Department inspected the site. While the experts from the OEPA found no concerns, the Health Department's non-registered inspector left the site with no verbal concerns, however, WIN Waste received the inspection review the next day, citing litter and dust on site. While we are required to clean litter daily, we are not required to have zero litter on-site all day long, as that would be impossible. This is not a new development—the Health Department has a track record of making up violations. Lydia Bruno, a former landfill inspector, said in her resignation letter: “there was an underlying pressure to amplify minor findings or to document things I did not see.”

- Fact: According to the latest EPA data, Ohio is the second-largest exporter of hazardous waste in the U.S. and operates two nuclear power plants without any in-state nuclear waste storage facilities. Waste is intended to be handled regionally, with returns for states that host responsible and safe disposal sites for the appropriate waste material to be significant. For instance, WIN Waste pays \$7 Million dollars in fees each year from its Seneca site, employs more than 100 workers, and pays for than \$20 million dollars annually ton Ohio businesses.

- Fact: This bill raises taxes in the State of Ohio and will cost more for local contractors to dispose of their waste, deterring or increasing costs for construction projects.

While WIN Waste understands the questions surrounding waste imported from other states, it is important to remember that the free market has developed the most cost-effective and environmentally sound methods for managing waste across state lines. Environmental protection should not be bound by state, county, or township borders. We urge this committee to focus on environmental outcomes, not waste origin.

To that end, WIN has invested in cutting-edge gas collection and treatment systems, which will soon generate millions of gallons of renewable natural gas (RNG)—a cleaner energy source that displaces fossil fuels. We respectfully recommend that this committee consider a tour of the site and explore the pollution control standards employed at our facilities versus others, if public health and safety are a real concern for the committee.

We also request a deeper understanding of the national waste management system, which reveals that Ohio plays a critical and responsible role and is a \$4 billion industry in the state of Ohio. Waste crosses state lines every day as part of a national network designed to maximize efficiency, minimize environmental impact, and ensure public health.

Now that we've covered the facts, we think it's important to point out that the latest amendment to this bill is unconstitutional and unlawful under the U.S. Constitution's Commerce Clause, Equal Protection Clause and the Ohio State Constitution's Uniformity

Clause. We look forward to continuing the discussion on how to best address public health and safety in a lawful and constitutional manner.

At WIN Waste Innovations, our ongoing investment in Ohio reflects confidence in this state's regulatory environment, economic potential, and communities. We remain fully committed to environmental excellence, public transparency, and local engagement, and fully opposed to fees that provide an unfair advantage to our competitors and deter investment in our site and our workforce.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

April 11, 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter to provide some insight as to why I have resigned from the Environmental Health Specialist in Training position after such a short period of time, with the hopes that my replacement may have a better foundation to serve both the public and the board.

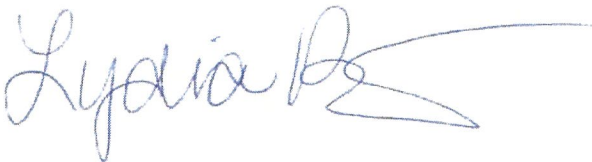
When I was awarded this role, I was very optimistic about the opportunity to utilize my educational background in biology and environmental studies and to serve the community that I was raised in. I strongly believed that I could contribute to the mission of the Seneca County General Health District: "Preventing disease, promoting wellness, and protecting the environment for the residents of Fostoria, Tiffin and Seneca County." In my first few weeks here, the job was fully living up to my expectations: I was learning about state rules and regulations for restaurants, wells, septic systems, and landfills, and was surrounded by an incredibly supportive team of coworkers and supervisors. Although I knew that I would be in charge of landfill oversight, I had not considered that in order to meet the expectations of the board, I would have to compromise my personal values.

My training for conducting landfill inspections included shadowing 3-4 inspections conducted by the Ohio EPA Division of Materials and Waste Management and learning from my coworkers how to properly fill out inspection forms based on my observations. In every inspection I shadowed, there were no violations found by EPA, and if there were any minor issues, I was advised to put it in the comments, let WIN know they needed to fix the issue, and follow up at subsequent inspections. When on my own, I continued conducting inspections in this manner. At the end of my training, I fully understood my role was to document observations relevant to the rules outlined in the Ohio Administrative Code.

[REDACTED] Furthermore, it seemed probable that with the hiring of additional persons to assist with or conduct inspections at the landfill that I would soon be signing my name to reports outlining observations that were not my own.

It is for these reasons that I felt it necessary to seek other employment. I had a wonderful group of coworkers and supervisors and I had a strong desire to serve the community that I grew up in. It was extremely disappointing to have to come to this decision, but I felt it was a decision I had to make. I feel that my values are perfectly aligned with the Core Values of the Seneca County General Health District: Honesty, Compassion, Teamwork, and Dependability. I urge the Board of Health to consider what I have written and the Core Values when making decisions regarding landfill compliance and oversight in the future.

Respectfully,



Lydia Bruno, EHSIT

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