



OEHA

OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

10W Broad St Suite 200
Columbus, OH 43215
info@OhioEHA.org

HB 96 Proponent Testimony
Presented by Courtney Myers, President
Ohio Environmental Health Association
House Natural Resources Committee
Chairman Don Jones
March 5, 2025

Chairman Jones, Vice Chair Robb Blasdel, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Natural Resources Committee, thank you for letting me testify today on House Bill 96, Ohio's biennial operating budget. My name is Courtney Myers, and I am the President of the Ohio Environmental Health Association. Our association represents nearly 600 Registered Environmental Health Specialists—commonly called health inspectors—and other environmental health industry partners and practitioners in Ohio. As part of their duties, environmental health specialists implement Ohio's environmental health laws and rules by working with industry and the public to ensure the safety of the food we eat at restaurants and grocery stores; the water quality of swimming pools, sewage and septic issues; and other environmental health issues for the health and safety of Ohioans. I am here today representing Ohio Environmental Health Association to testify on EPA's proposed revisions and reallocations of current solid waste fees in House Bill 96 in the As Introduced version of the budget.

In Ohio, there are 65 local health departments that work as regulatory partners with the Ohio EPA in the solid and infectious waste and construction and demolition debris programs. This involves licensing and inspections of the operations at these facilities. Local health departments are boots on the ground at these facilities, investigating complaints and ensuring compliance with the rules established to protect human health and the environment. There is little to no direct funding provided for much of this work. Local health departments retain just \$2,500 of a \$60,000 annual license fee for a landfill and \$750 for solid waste transfer facilities.

Landfills, while necessary, are significant sources of potential environmental hazards. The redistribution of fees collected from these facilities represents an opportunity to fund proactive measures that directly address the health risks posed by these sites. Local health departments play a critical role in monitoring air and water quality near landfills, and allocating landfill fees to local health departments would ensure these vital public health monitoring activities are appropriately supported and enhanced. This could result in earlier identification of contamination risks and swift actions to mitigate any issues in order to better protect the health of the public and our communities.

Additionally, providing one waste type designation at the point of transfer or disposal will eliminate the possibility of misclassification of the waste - removing an incentive to log loads as construction and demolition debris when in fact the load contains solid waste, and effectively closes a loophole. This change may also have the added benefit of incentivizing recycling of construction and demolition debris over current disposal. Local health departments and Ohio EPA have worked to establish a regulatory framework for construction and demolition debris recycling operations with only nominal licensing fees.

In conclusion, directing fees collected from landfills to benefit local health departments is sound public policy and a prudent financial decision, but also a positive step toward safeguarding public health and the environment. It is an investment in the well-being of our communities, fostering safer and healthier living conditions for Ohio's residents.

Once again, Chairman Jones and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on HB 96. I am happy to answer any questions you have at this time.