



111 Madison St.
Tiffin, Ohio 44883

To: Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
From: Bill Frankart, Seneca County Commissioner
Subject: SB 147 Proponent Testimony, April 1, 2025

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee:

Good afternoon. I am Bill Frankart, one of the three commissioners in Seneca County. On behalf of the Seneca County Board of Commissioners, I am here today to provide testimony in support of Senator Bill Reineke's proposed Senate Bill 147. My aim is to offer more context and background information to better explain the need for this vital legislation, and I'd like to show you a short video to accompany my testimony today.

As the video will show, the WIN Waste of Seneca County landfill is the unwanted and ever-growing giant in our backyard. The landfill receives over 2 million tons of waste each year, 98% of which comes from out of state.

It is difficult to grasp the massive size of the landfill without seeing it in person, but the video I am about to show will help you understand the scope of this operation. As you watch it, please bear in mind that this monstrosity is about a five-minute bicycle ride from Fostoria, which is home to about 13,000 people.

Many of Fostoria's 13,000 residents felt helpless when the Ohio EPA approved the landfill's expansion, while WIN Waste promoted the idea that approving the landfill's expansion was a business-friendly policy because WIN Waste brings money to the community and provides jobs, but that ideology falls short when the scale of benefit and detriment tilts completely off-balance.

Economic development is a key component to a strong community. But when business success becomes the end goal instead of the pipeline to a thriving community, the community suffers. WIN Waste grows, and Fostoria suffers.

Fostoria families suffer from foul odors from the landfill, decreased real estate values, waste-filled railcars – many with holes and exposed waste – sitting near their backyards, and fears over the landfill's potential impact on their physical and mental health. Longtime residents are moving away, and businesses can be fearful of investing in a community that cannot support its workforce needs.



The Ohio Department of Development is the state's foundation for economic development. Its mission is "Empowering communities to succeed." We can learn from that philosophy because simply empowering businesses is not the end goal. According to the Ohio Department of Development, its work is "aimed at helping Ohio businesses, communities, and individuals thrive." Business development should be the channel to the success of communities and the welfare of the individuals who live there.

The Ohio Department of Development website says one of its goals is to help "build strong communities in Ohio." Those strong communities, the website says, "provide an environment for entrepreneurship and job creation as well as a strong quality of life for residents."

Quality of life for Fostoria residents can't be neglected as a predominant influence on the decision to support Senate Bill 147. When the Ohio EPA permitted the landfill to operate for years under a consent order that allowed the landfill to function at below state standards, the issue of the quality of life of Fostoria residents was ignored. When the Ohio EPA granted the most recent expansion permit that allowed the landfill to creep within 6,518 feet from the City of Fostoria, the Ohio EPA did not take quality of life into consideration.

We ask you to recognize the need to consider community welfare when creating business-friendly legislation. Business-friendly is not always synonymous with community-friendly. Please join our efforts to improve and protect the quality of life for residents living near the WIN Waste landfill, and by all landfills, by supporting Senate Bill 147. The bill will bring oversight back to the local health district where it belongs and direct more landfill-generated fees to the health district so it can fund sufficient oversight.

The first step in gaining stronger local oversight is creating the opportunity, through Senate Bill 147, for counties like Seneca County to withdraw from joint solid waste management districts. Establishing our own solid waste management district would free our county to make decisions that best benefit our county. Current law requires all counties in a solid waste district to agree to the withdrawal. The other counties, who have no financial or emotional stake in Seneca County, have the power to make decisions that affect the everyday lives our residents. Senate Bill 147 creates a pathway to withdrawal that would allow Seneca County to operate independently and create waste management policies that directly impact the welfare of our residents.

Senate Bill 147 creates the opportunity to generate desperately needed funding. The bill authorizes the solid waste management district to levy new permissive fees on the disposal of construction and demolition debris, most of which will go to the health district to fund the oversight of the waste disposal facilities paying the fees and to address the facilities' impacts on public health, safety, and welfare. Under the bill, a permissive fee between \$1 and \$2 per ton



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can be levied for the disposal of construction and demolition debris that is generated out-of-state.

In 2024, WIN Waste accepted over 1,800,000 tons in construction and demolition debris. About 98% of waste accepted by the landfill comes from other states. The new legislation will authorize new permissive fees that will generate desperately needed funds to ensure a positive quality of life for Fostoria residents.

Among other needs, the fees will fund an Environmental Impact Study that will allow the health district to identify any of the landfill's detrimental effects on local residents and the environment. Although many states require landfills to fund Environmental Impact Studies, Ohio does not, leaving the burden to pay for this vital research on the health district.

An important distinction in this bill is a change in the way solid waste disposal fees are used. Under current law, the fees must be used for ten specific purposes associated with solid waste management, but Senate Bill 147 widens the scope of use of the funds. Instead of restricting those funds for solid waste management efforts, it would also allow the money to be used to lessen the landfill's impact on public health, safety, and welfare.

Ohio law has bound Seneca County in legislative chains for far too long. Current waste management legislation is not community-friendly. It does not empower leaders at the county level who want to protect their constituents. It supports policies that unfairly spread landfill fees across the state, leaving Fostoria residents unprotected. Our residents live with the impact of the landfill every day while the money that the landfill generates in the residents' backyards benefit people who have never even heard of Seneca County.

As a county commissioner, I am frustrated that current legislation limits my ability to protect the welfare of my constituents. It is my plea that you place the power to safeguard my constituents' quality of life back in the hands of the local leaders who care deeply for our neighbors.

Sincerely,

Seneca County Commissioner Bill Frankart