

**To: Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee**  
**From: Robert Podach, Seneca County Board of Health Vice President, Fostoria City Councilman**  
**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 Robert Podach, and I am Vice President of the Seneca County Board of Health and a Fostoria City Councilman. I am among many people who have been fighting to protect our local residents from the potential impacts of the landfill, and I ask you to please empower us in the fight by supporting Senate Bill 147.

The Seneca County General Health District faces the daunting challenge of overseeing the WIN Waste of Seneca County landfill and the nearly 2 million tons of waste it brings into our county from other states every year. For far too long, the health district has borne the weight of overseeing the landfill while receiving a small portion of the waste disposal fees generated from WIN Waste.

The landfill makes millions of dollars in revenue in our backyards, and yet most of the fees generated by WIN Waste are spread across the state while the health district works tirelessly with insufficient funding to provide proper oversight.

Senate Bill 147 creates new fees, allowing the health district to receive more money towards its efforts to ensure the landfill is abiding by state regulations that are designed to protect the health and welfare of our residents and the environment. WIN Waste landfill has a history of noncompliance, documented failure to meet the standards of the air pollution laws, and notices of violations from the Ohio EPA and health district, and fighting to keep them in compliance with the law requires relentless diligence. Our health district, our board of health, and our residents are exhausted from the fight, and we ask you to bring relief to our county by supporting Senate Bill 147.

Commissioner Bill Frankart showed you a video that helped you comprehend the massive size of the landfill, and I would like to talk to you about the history of its growth. I have submitted a PowerPoint of maps to help you visualize the growth of the landfill. In 1993, the landfill served the community as a small municipal landfill that comprised less than 84 acres. If you flip through the pages, you can see the continual growth. Today, the landfill encompasses a massive 261 acres and plans to expand to 480 acres.

Just as shocking as the landfill's size is its proximity to the City of Fostoria. The landfill's progressive expansion has continually brought it closer to the City of Fostoria and the city's water source, the Fostoria Reservoir. As the landfill grew, it crept closer and closer to the city,

bringing any potentially negative impacts nearer to the backyards of city residents. Today, the landfill is just 6,518 feet from the City of Fostoria and just 6,960 feet from the Fostoria Reservoir.

It is imperative that the health district identify any negative effects of a massive landfill that is located so near the city and its 13,000 residents, therefore the health district has taken steps to contract with a professional service vendor to complete a comprehensive environmental impact study that would research a wide range of environmental, social, and economic factors on residents, businesses, and government entities.

Although many states require landfills to fund environmental impact studies, Ohio does not. The burden to pay for the study falls onto the health district, highlighting another unfair discrepancy in waste management policies in Ohio.

Unless you have an 1,100-acre landfill in your backyard, you cannot comprehend the many ways a landfill can potentially damage lives and the environment. The environmental impact study will research the potential damaging effects of noise pollution and compromised air quality. It will study the landfill's potential impacts on groundwater and surface water, wetlands, and rivers.

The study will research the landfill's potential impacts on soil, endangered animal and plant species, community economics, farmland preservation, and energy and natural resources.

The study will determine the landfill's potential effect on residents' physical and mental health, and any harm it could have on historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources, and much more.

Air and water quality have been a big and necessary part of the conversation about the landfill, but you can see that there are many ways a landfill can harm a community. Yet, the health district has struggled to acquire the funding for necessary oversight. Senate Bill 147 would create desperately needed funds for oversight by authorizing the solid waste management district to levy new fees on construction and demolition debris to be paid to the health district.

Senate Bill 147 would also eliminate restrictions on how the disposal fees for solid waste are used. Under the current law, these fees can only be used for solid waste management purposes, but Senate Bill 147 would allow the funds to be used to address impacts from solid waste facilities on public health, safety, and welfare.

The residents of Fostoria live every day with fears about the many ways the landfill could damage our lives and our community, and yet current waste management law does not offer sufficient protections for public health, safety, and welfare. Senate Bill 147 can change that. Please support Senate Bill 147 and give our residents hope that Fostoria can once again be a healthy and thriving community.

