



OEHA

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**HB 96 Interested Party Testimony
Presented by Chuck DeJonckheere
Ohio Environmental Health Association
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Chairman Tim Schaffer
May 14, 2025**

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on House Bill 96, Ohio's biennial operating budget. My name is Chuck DeJonckheere, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Ohio Environmental Health Association (OEHA) as the Chair of the Solid Waste Technical Committee. Our association represents nearly 600 Registered Environmental Health Specialists and other environmental health industry partners and practitioners in Ohio. I am here today representing OEHA to testify on EPA's proposed revisions and reallocations of current solid waste fees in House Bill 96 in the Executive 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. 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 directly allocating a portion of landfill fees to local health departments would ensure these vital public health monitoring activities are appropriately supported and enhanced to better protect the health of the public and our communities.

We recognize the good work that Sen. Reineke and this committee have done on a similar, but separate proposal in SB 147. Both proposals have mechanisms which provide more resources to better support local public health needs compared to the status quo which is greatly appreciated. We believe the Executive proposal in HB 96 has some advantages which should be considered. First, we believe the fee approach in HB 96 is cleaner. Essentially, if you are disposing waste in a solid waste landfill you are charged the solid waste fee. This encourages the disposal of solid waste at solid waste facilities, and C&DD waste at C&DD facilities. Additionally, with 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 C&DD when in fact the load contains solid waste, and effectively closes a loophole. Lastly, this proposal should disincentivize out-of-state waste from filling Ohio's landfills, and may have the added benefit of incentivizing recycling of construction and demolition debris over current disposal.

In conclusion, the HB 96 proposal and 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. We encourage the Senate to restore the Executive proposal on solid waste and C&DD.

Once again, Chairman Schaffer 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.