

**Testimony to the Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee**  
**Seneca County Commissioner Bill Frankart**  
**HB 96**  
**May 7, 2025**

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Bill Frankart, and I serve as a Commissioner for Seneca County. I appreciate the chance to testify to some of our county's top priorities in the state operating budget, which directly impacts the health, safety, and economic resilience and growth of our communities.

First, I urge your support for a House provision of the budget that requires the Ohio Department of Medicaid to submit for an **1115 Medicaid Waiver** that would allow federal Medicaid dollars to be used to cover eligible health care costs for individuals incarcerated in our county jail—particularly those who are pre-trial and have not yet been convicted. Today, counties are left to fully absorb these costs. These are often individuals with serious mental illness or substance use disorders who would qualify for Medicaid if not for their incarceration status. Allowing coverage during this period would not only improve health outcomes and continuity of care but could reduce recidivism and emergency room visits after release. This is a policy rooted not only in our responsibility to provide medical care to incarcerated individuals but also in fiscal responsibility.

Second, Seneca County is urging this committee to consider **amending Senate Bill 147/House Bill 222 into the budget**. This legislation passed the Senate unanimously on April 9<sup>th</sup> this year. The WIN Waste of Seneca County landfill is an 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. This monstrosity is about a five-minute bicycle ride from Fostoria, which is home to about 13,000 people. Among other provisions, this policy would enforce local control and give counties like Seneca County the ability to withdraw from joint solid waste management districts and to control their own destinies.

We also urge continued and increased **state support for jail construction and renovation grants**. Many counties like ours are facing aging, undersized facilities that no longer meet safety standards—for inmates or staff. In Seneca County, our jail is over capacity more often than not, putting a strain on operations and creating safety concerns. State investment in modern, secure, and humane facilities is essential not only for public safety but for meeting state and federal standards. These grants help rural counties like ours avoid having to choose between critical infrastructure and core services. The House drastically reduced the Governor's proposal for jail grants, and we would like to see those reinstituted in the Senate version.

Next, we strongly support sustained and robust **Brownfield remediation funding** through the plan submitted by the Ohio Land Bank Association. These funds are making a visible difference across Ohio, helping communities clean up long-abandoned industrial sites and prepare them for new investment. In Seneca County, like many others, we have sites that have sat vacant for decades—reminders of past economic opportunity and barriers to new growth. Brownfield funds give us the

ability to turn these liabilities into assets, creating jobs, boosting local tax bases, and protecting public health.

Finally, **Seneca County has experienced significantly delays to agreed-upon higher reimbursement from the Ohio Department of Medicaid to the county for emergency medical services (EMS)**, creating financial strain on local providers and government resources. Despite submitting the necessary documentation and following required protocols, the county has waited an extended period—well beyond standard timelines—for payment. These delays hinder the county's ability to sustain high-quality EMS response, as providers rely on timely reimbursements to cover personnel, equipment, and operational costs. The prolonged wait for funds owed by the state is especially burdensome in smaller or rural counties, where budget flexibility is limited. While Seneca County has been assured that the payment amount would be roughly in line with what it would be if EMS was designated as “essential,” this has not yet materialized and should be examined by the legislature if it continues.

Many of these priorities are shared with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio and other municipalities around the state. The state’s partnership in these areas—through Medicaid reform, jail funding, and brownfield redevelopment—is essential.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.