

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Ranking Member, and esteemed members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of Sub House Bill 54. My name is Brandon Lambert, and I am proud to serve as a councilman for the City of Brunswick, Ohio. I write this today representing the voices of thousands of Brunswick residents who are united in their opposition to the proposed Interstate 71 interchange at Boston Road—a project that threatens our community's character, safety, and quality of life. Sub House Bill 54 offers a critical opportunity to address this issue by providing a framework to repeal misguided mandates like the one forcing this interchange upon us, and I urge your support for this legislation.

For years, the City of Strongsville has pursued this interchange, cloaking it as a solution to traffic congestion. But let's be clear: this is not about safety or regional benefit. It's about economic gain for Strongsville—at Brunswick's expense. Strongsville's true motivation lies in its industrial park, a sprawling commercial development just north of Boston Road. This interchange would serve as a convenient artery to funnel traffic and commerce directly into their industrial zone, boosting their tax base and economic prospects while leaving Brunswick to bear the burden of disrupted neighborhoods, displaced families, and irreversible damage to our residential landscape.

Boston Road is not a commercial corridor, nor should it be forced to become one. It's a quiet, tree-lined street where families have built their lives—some for decades. The feasibility study commissioned by Strongsville itself revealed that constructing this interchange would require demolishing numerous homes. These aren't just houses; they're the foundations of our community. For what? A projected reduction in congestion that the same study admits will be minimal at best, with backups persisting on Route 82 regardless. This isn't a solution to a regional problem—it's a calculated move to pad Strongsville's bottom line.

Strongsville's traffic woes stem from their own choices. Over decades, they've packed their Route 82 corridor with big-box stores, malls, and sprawling development, creating the very congestion they now claim to solve by pushing into our backyard. Brunswick didn't ask for this. We didn't overdevelop our exits or invite this chaos. Yet, through a backdoor provision slipped into the state transportation budget—without local input or proper planning—they've roped us into footing the bill for their self-inflicted problem.

Sub House Bill 54 can right this wrong by empowering communities like ours to push back against such overreach. Beyond the economic motivations, the practical implications are dire. Boston Road's hilly terrain and residential layout make it unfit for highway traffic. A major jet fuel line runs beneath it, posing logistical and safety risks that have barely been addressed. Property values along the corridor have already taken a hit as uncertainty looms over homeowners, many of whom are retirees on fixed incomes who can't absorb a 40% drop in their home's worth or afford to relocate. This interchange doesn't just threaten our present—it jeopardizes our future. Sub House Bill 54 represents a chance to restore fairness and local control. It aligns with the principle that communities should have a say in projects that fundamentally alter their fabric—not have them dictated by a neighboring city's economic ambitions or a hastily inserted legislative mandate. Brunswick has stood firm against this interchange, with our City Council passing multiple resolutions in opposition and over 1,300 residents signing petitions to protect our home. We ask you to stand with us. I respectfully urge this committee to support Sub House Bill 54 and repeal the I-71 interchange mandate. Let's send a message that Ohio values its residents over unchecked

development and that economic gain for one city shouldn't come at the cost of another's heart and soul. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brandon Lambert Councilman, City of Brunswick, Ohio

Thank you,

Councilman Brandon Lambert

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