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**State Senator Kristina Roegner**

Ohio’s 27th Senate District

Sponsor Testimony

Senate Resolution 454

Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

February 12, 2020

Chairman Hoagland, Vice-Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member O’Brien and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Resolution 454, which urges Congress to amend the Clean Air Act to allow for the elimination of the e-check program, and to repeal and replace the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards.[[1]](#footnote-1) This resolution is companion to House Resolution 274, sponsored by State Representative Bill Roemer, which recently was approved by the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

As you may know, there are seven counties in Ohio which are currently required to conduct e-checks on vehicles that are registered to owners within these counties. They include Lorain, Cuyahoga, Medina, Summit, Portage, Geauga, and Lake. Under the requirements of the e-check program, all vehicles registered in these seven counties that are older than four model years must be tested biannually for ground-level ozone. The only exceptions to this requirement are for historical or collector’s vehicles, vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds, motorcycles, motor homes, vehicles older than 25 years, and fully electric vehicles.

The e-check process has been a constant frustration for citizens of Northeast Ohio since it was first implemented in 1996. Many people in our region find the program burdensome and time-consuming—often having to break away from work during the middle of the day to have their vehicle emissions-tested. Moreover, since this requirement falls exclusively on vehicles with a model age of at least four years, it is a burden that disproportionately falls on low-income individuals.

Moreover, the program’s effectiveness at actually accomplishing its intended goal—namely, cleaner air and reduced levels of ground-level ozone is questionable. The State of Ohio currently spends over $10.6 million annually to conduct e-checks, with cars commonly failing simply because of a check engine light, rather than any actual emissions problems. This is one of the most problematic aspects of the e-check program. An illuminated check engine light can be triggered because of any number of possible reasons, many of which have nothing to do with ground-level ozone emissions.

In other words, while hard-working Ohioans in Huron and Stark County can investigate the cause of the illuminated check engine light and then arrange to have their vehicle repaired on their own schedule, their neighbors who live just miles across the county border in Summit or Lorain County cannot, without risking the loss of their driving privileges—privileges that enable them to get to and from work and to support their families.

This is clearly unfair. Airborne pollutants do not respect county lines. Residents of these 7 counties should not be unfairly singled out by the federal government, inconvenienced, and forced to make costly repairs to their vehicles simply because of where they reside.

I do believe there are superior methods of approaching the important issue of clean air in our communities. This resolution urges Congress to begin working on improving this faulty system which causes unnecessary frustration on the part of thousands of Ohioans each year.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

1. For more information on these standards, which outline appropriate ground-level ozone levels among others, see <https://www.epa.gov/ground-level-ozone-pollution/2015-national-ambient-air-quality-standards-naaqs-ozone>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)