

Chair Swearingen, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch and members of the Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for accepting my written testimony in favor of HB 276. My name is Aaron Harrison, I am a resident of Montville Township, Ohio and one of the Medina County Commissioners.

The proposed I-71 interchange at Boston Road is, plain and simple, a bad idea. I hear from residents daily about the negative impact this interchange will have on our community, their homes and livelihoods and Medina County as we know it.

The most heartbreaking stories are from people who face losing their homes. The stories come from folks who have been here their whole life and others who, like me, discovered Medina County later in life and loved it so much they couldn't leave. The love these people have for their chosen community makes it even harder to witness their emotions as they consider the unspeakable - losing their homes and being forced to move to a new area that is both unfamiliar and intimidating. Even those whose homes are not directly threatened by the interchange face an uncertain future as their once quiet neighborhood is involuntarily transformed into a thoroughfare with the resulting exponential increase of commercial traffic.

Many of these homeowners are retired, or soon-to-be retired and living on fixed incomes. They spent their working years saving wisely for the future and paying off their mortgage so they could enjoy their golden years with sufficient means to fix up their house and spend their spare time in the company of their loved ones. This proposed interchange rips that dream away from so many. Even when they are compensated for their homes, the current real estate market will make it virtually impossible to purchase an equivalent replacement home without borrowing additional funds.

The personal impact of this interchange is my primary concern, but it is not the only concern. Boston Road is a hilly road with a jet fuel pipeline running directly beneath it. Moving a jet fuel line is a logistical nightmare, and every relocation scenario puts it closer to the front doors of the residents who will remain. Levelling Boston and moving a 30-year-old jet fuel line are massive, expensive undertakings that would deplete resources from both the City of Brunswick and Medina County for a project that is being demanded by an adjacent community located in another county.

I was proud to stand with dozens of residents of Brunswick, Strongsville and neighboring communities alongside Senator Romanchuk and Representatives Miller and Ray in Columbus last month as they introduced this repeal legislation. I hope their fellow members of the General Assembly consider this proposal with fresh eyes, recognize the injustice that is inherent in this flawed legislation and see that inaction on this repeal initiative means their community, or another one within their district, could become the next Brunswick.

I ask that this testimony be considered in support of this critical legislation that so many residents are counting on to save their residential community. Thank you for your consideration of my written testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron M. Harrison  
Medina County Commissioner