

Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for your time and consideration of this written testimony. My name is Carl DeForest, and I am the City Manager/Safety Director for the City of Brunswick in Medina County. I am writing to encourage the passage of Senate Bill 155 as introduced by Senator Mark Romanchuk. The city and our citizens are thankful for the support and efforts of Senator Romanchuk to right a wrong by repealing section 5501.60 of the Ohio Revised Code. Bad law will always undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of government at all levels.

Bad law can often be seen as an overreach of big government, forcing unfunded mandates on local governments and citizens alike. A recent example of bad law can be seen in this year's House Bill 23, where a provision was inserted into Ohio Revised Code 5501.60 that would mandate the Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation to construct limited access exit and entrance ramps every 4.5 miles on the interstate system when certain conditions exist. This provision represents bad law in the fact that it attempts to bypass long-established policies, federal regulations and sensible government by allowing legislators to mandate access ramps to the interstate without input or support from those local municipalities and citizens impacted. Whether this provision was introduced based on favor, faulty logic, greed, or shortsightedness, that should not matter now. The hijacking of sensible laws and long-established policies that were based on objective logic and equal representation is inexcusable, indefensible and should not be tolerated. Nothing about this provision is actually based on traffic safety.

The City of Brunswick faces the specter of having tranquil neighborhoods devastated by the desire of Strongsville officials to further develop their tax base by expanding their industrial park. This provision is not about safety, it is about greed and a myopic attitude that disregards the economic cost, the loss of homes and the shattering of dreams of the citizens displaced. The harm that this project would cause cannot be overstated. It is an unjust, calculated effort that discounts the value of the lives and property of the citizens who would forever be victims of the avarice of those who proposed the original language. We should not allow this to happen.

The radical negative impact of this law as introduced has resulted in chaos, stress and reduced property values for dozens of families in the immediate area, in both Strongsville and Brunswick. It is time to remedy this inexplicable oversight and pass Senate Bill 155. Give these innocent homeowners their lives and futures back.

The City of Brunswick cannot afford the cost of improving Boston Road, moving a high-pressure gas line and dealing with the chaos and disorder that 5501.60 brings with it. The law, which was the brainchild of one greedy mayor and one state representative will destroy the wellbeing of scores of families, whole neighborhoods and the community of Brunswick. This provision represents government at its worst. This is bad law, and I implore you to support Senate Bill 155 and repeal section 5501.60. It is not too late to right this wrong and give hope back to those citizens who have been thrown into panic and fear with this nonsensical overreach.

Respectfully,  
Carl S. DeForest, City Manager/Safety Director