



May 23, 2023

Subject: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 119

Honorable Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, Senator Wilkin and Senator O'Brien,

I am Seneca County Commissioner Anthony Paradiso, and I am writing to you on behalf of the Seneca County Board of Commissioners to express our steadfast support and deep appreciation for Senator Bill Reineke's proposed Senate Bill 119. As representatives of Seneca County, we have closely aligned ourselves with Senator Reineke in our shared commitment to confront the pressing issue of underregulated out-of-state trash and the imperative need for enhanced oversight over landfill facilities.

Like many others in Ohio, our county has experienced the adverse consequences of under-controlled waste disposal. The influx of out-of-state trash, primarily from New York, has raised significant concerns among our constituents and residents across Ohio regarding the well-being of our environment, the safety of our water sources and the overall quality of life in our community and state. Under the current regulatory framework, our ability to address this issue has been limited, leaving our residents feeling vulnerable and unheard.

Senate Bill 119, as proposed by Senator Reineke, represents a crucial turning point in our collective efforts to ensure a safer and more secure community. The bill introduces essential changes to existing laws, granting regulatory agencies the authority and responsibility to exercise greater oversight over landfill facilities. This transformative shift in the law will empower these agencies to enforce stricter regulations, monitor waste disposal practices more effectively and safeguard the health and well-being of our constituents.

We wholeheartedly support the three major changes outlined in Senate Bill 119:

- 1.) Improved Process for Local Input:** The bill recognizes the importance of local perspectives and community impact in landfill decisions. By requiring applications for new solid waste facilities or expansions to consider public benefit, convenience and necessity, the bill ensures that our constituents have a voice in determining the future of their own community. This change will rectify the long-standing issue of local voices being disregarded, ensuring that decisions regarding landfill operations truly serve the best interests of our residents.
- 2.) Increased and Equalized Fees:** SB 119 offers a solution to challenges posed by federal Interstate Commerce law and Ohio's concerns about out-of-state trash. Interstate Commerce law prevents charging higher fees for out-of-state refuse, inadvertently incentivizing other states to use Ohio as a convenient dumping ground. The bill aims to remedy this issue by equalizing disposal fees regardless of the origin of the waste. It increases disposal fees by using Consumer Price Index, crucial due to outdated fees not reflecting current costs associated with the oversight of these facilities. By removing the unintentional incentives that attract out-of-state waste, the state can protect its environment and preserve its reputation. Another important provision of the bill is



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the equalization of fees regardless of the categorization of waste. The bill also establishes a local landfill oversight fund supported by a \$1 per ton fee, empowering local health districts to enforce waste laws and enhance oversight for community well-being. Through this comprehensive approach, the bill addresses the challenges posed by out-of-state trash, prioritizes the well-being of communities and matches the size and scale of landfill facilities to the funding generated for their oversight.

- 3.) Strengthening Local Health Districts:** Seneca County faces a unique situation within the Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca Joint Solid Waste Management District. As one of three counties on the board, we bear the burden of collecting about 90 percent of the trash, resulting in nearly all of the district's revenue originating from our county. However, the allocated budget by OSS for oversight at landfill facilities in our tri-county district is only \$61,000 annually, a mere 2.4 percent of the district's total budget. This imbalance forces our residents to endure the majority of the problems associated with having a landfill while the necessary regulatory agencies receive inadequate resources for oversight. Despite our efforts to advocate for increased oversight funding, our county faces challenges within the joint board. The interests of the other two counties often outweigh our own, leaving us outvoted on decisions that directly impact our community. Furthermore, it has become evident that under current laws leaving a tri-county district like ours is a difficult, if not impossible task. In light of this situation, our county urgently requires an exit strategy. SB 119 provides the solution we need. By giving us the option to create our own district, we can allocate significantly more funding for oversight, addressing the specific concerns and priorities of our community. This change would strengthen oversight measures, instilling confidence in our constituents and assuring them that their health and well-being are our top priorities.

The Seneca County Board of Commissioners commends Senator Reineke for his unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in championing this vital legislation. Senate Bill 119 aligns perfectly with our county's mission to protect the health and safety of our constituents while fostering a sustainable and thriving community. We wholeheartedly support this bill as it offers a transformative opportunity to confront the waste disposal challenges that have plagued Seneca County for far too long.

We urge each committee member to lend your support to Senate Bill 119 and join us in creating a safer and more sustainable future for all Ohioans. By enacting this legislation, you will affirm your commitment to protecting the interests and well-being of our community, ensuring a cleaner environment and fostering a sense of security among our residents.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. I am eager to provide any additional information or answer any questions you may have regarding our support for Senate Bill 119. Together, let us pave the way for a brighter and more sustainable future for Seneca County and all of Ohio.

Sincerely,

The Seneca County Board of Commissioners