

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, May 23, 2017

Testimony in favor of SB 159

Submitted by Tom Horton, Government Affairs Manager, Waste Management

Good morning. My name is Tom Horton, I am Government Affairs Manager for Waste Management's Michigan, Ohio and Indiana operations. Waste Management has offices and operating divisions located throughout Michigan. The collective operations of our parent company combine to make Waste Management the largest provider of solid waste collection, disposal and recycling services in North America. I am speaking today in support of SB 159.

Waste Management operates approximately 500 trucks across Michigan. 122 of those trucks, about 25% of our Michigan fleet, are powered by natural gas. In total, 44% of the trucks in our North American fleet of 17,000 vehicles run on natural gas. As a company, we are committed to moving to alternative fuels and natural gas has proven itself to be the best choice for applications across our fleet.

As noted in the Senate Fiscal Agency (SFA) analysis, natural gas powered trucks are good for the environment, significantly reducing greenhouse gas and particulate emissions to levels diesel engines cannot achieve. On average, each diesel truck in our fleet burns 8000 gallons of diesel fuel per year. In 2016, our 122 natural gas trucks operating in Michigan reduced our diesel fuel consumption by almost a million gallons. That translates into improved air quality in communities where natural gas trucks operate.

As the Senate Fiscal Agency analysis explained, because natural gas fuel systems are heavier, trucks powered by this fuel source are not able to carry as much cargo weight as trucks running on diesel. SB 159 makes it more economically viable for companies to switch to natural gas by giving them the ability to haul loads equivalent in weight to loads hauled by diesel powered trucks.

The federal government has already acted to erase this disparity by adopting the 2000 lb. weight exemption for the Interstate Highway System that SB 159 is seeking for Michigan's roads. Voting to support SB 159 will provide regulatory symmetry with the Federal government and surrounding states like Indiana, Illinois and Ohio that have already adopted similar legislation for natural gas powered trucks.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today.