



House Finance Committee
HB 221
2/6/2018

Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Cera, my name is Dusty Parker and I currently serve on the Board of the Ohio Rural Water Association (ORWA). On behalf of ORWA, I would like to urge your support for HB 221, important legislation aimed at addressing Ohio's water and sewer infrastructure needs. Since 1976, ORWA has provided on-site technical assistance to rural communities with water and wastewater systems throughout Ohio. Today, we continue to expand the base of benefits we provide to our members. Our system members provide water and wastewater services to approximately 2.01 million Ohioans.

Water and sewer lateral lines, or the pipes that connect buildings to the main lines are often outdated and in dire need of repair. Lateral lines that are outdated or in disrepair can often impact a customer's water quality and service. Since most of these lateral connections are located on private property, it can be challenging to use public dollars to maintain them. The Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) recently addressed this problem by amending its policies to include lateral improvement projects as eligible for funding in cases where the property owner has consented to grant the agency an easement for the area of their property through which the lateral lines run. In doing so, OPWC is able to provide funding to repair and replace damaged and aging lateral lines without infringing on property rights. HB 221 would help protect Ohio's drinking water by codifying OPWC policies in the Ohio Revised Code, which would allow state funds to be used for the maintenance and replacement of water and sewer lateral lines.

Ohio's policy-makers have gone to great lengths to improve the water quality in our state. ORWA has supported many of these efforts and has worked to partner with the state to accomplish its goals. HB 221 provides yet another opportunity to protect the public from contaminated drinking water, by ensuring that damaged and aging lateral lines can be properly repaired and replaced when necessary.

Thank you for considering my testimony today, I urge your support for HB 221. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Dustin Parker
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