



ALLIANCE *for the*
GREAT LAKES

Proponent Testimony - Ohio House Bill 643 (Rep. Arndt & Rep. Patterson)

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Good morning Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Cera and members of the committee. My name is Crystal M. C. Davis and I am the Ohio based Policy Director for the Alliance for the Great Lakes (The Alliance). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 643.

From avid boaters and coastal business owners to the citizens who rely on their tap for clean water, Lake Erie is the unifier that brings all Ohioans together. Our state's economy, health and future depends on our ability to protect and preserve our greatest natural resource. Toxic harmful algal blooms created by agricultural pollution plague the western basin of Lake Erie and need immediate attention. At the Alliance, we are committed to supporting policy, community and business solutions that bring us closer to achieving phosphorus reduction goals.

The Alliance is the oldest Great Lakes organization devoted 100 percent to the lakes. Our professional staff works with scientists, policymakers, businesses, community groups and everyday citizens to protect and restore the world's largest surface freshwater resource. From forging forward-looking Great Lakes policies to promoting Great Lakes education to on-the-ground efforts to improve thousands of miles of Great Lakes shoreline, we've been out front and behind the scenes caring for the lakes for almost 50 years.

We applaud the recent action of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) to designate the open waters of western Lake Erie impaired for algae in the 2018 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report. This positions us to begin using all of the tools available to clean up our lake.

We also appreciate Reps. Arndt and Patterson's leadership on creating funding to address the continued algae problem in Ohio. The establishment of phosphorus reduction programs, prioritizing sub-watersheds by hot spots, funding for purchasing efficient agricultural equipment, and funding to support research are all steps in the right direction. While these actions alone will

not completely achieve our desired outcomes for Lake Erie, they are important stepping stones. Chairman Ryan, we thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony on HB 643.