



**House State & Local Government Committee
Opponent Testimony – HB 121
5/9/2017**

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in opposition to HB 121. My name is Kevin Strang and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Rural Water Association (ORWA). Since 1976, ORWA has provided free, 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/or wastewater services to approximately 2.01 million Ohioans.

While HB 121 might seem like a short and simple piece of legislation, ORWA fears that, if enacted, it could have a devastating impact on water projects throughout Ohio. Current law allows water works professionals to evaluate and select the type of pipe they specify based on the needs of their individual communities. HB 121 has the potential to jeopardize the decisions of the design engineer working on a project. Furthermore, this legislation threatens a community's ability to select a type of piping material that reflect the individual needs of that community. Additionally, HB 121 would likely cause delays in water and wastewater projects and could lead to bid protests and costly litigation over pipe selection.

ORWA believes the final decision on pipe material should be left to those professionals who know the needs of the community. Concerns over pipe selection would be best addressed at the local level, not through changing the Ohio Revised Code, which will significantly impact every water and wastewater project in Ohio, not just the few localities identified by the proponents.

I encourage the committee to closely consider the concerns shared by the numerous opponents to this bill. ORWA looks forward to working with this body on efforts to protect local water and wastewater systems and the customers they serve. Unfortunately, HB 121 simply does not accomplish that goal.

I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to testify on HB 121. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Sincerely,

Kevin Strang
ORWA, Executive Director