



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Bill 2 – Proponent Written Testimony

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Chairman Vitale, Vice Chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today on Senate Bill 2.

Senate Bill 2 would create a Statewide Watershed Planning and Management Program for the purpose of coordinating water quality improvement efforts across the state on a watershed by watershed basis. Under the bill, watershed planning and management coordinators would be assigned to a watershed or combination of watersheds in a common region.

These new coordinators are to assist soil and water conservation districts in identifying sources and areas of water quality impairment. They would also collect data used in quantifying water quality and nutrient best management practices to establish baselines for best management practice utilization. The coordinators would also assist political subdivisions or organizations in the creation of nine-element plans for federal funding of water quality projects. These are worthy goals that will further water quality improvement efforts across the state.

The bill reflects the reality there are many ongoing water quality improvement efforts happening at many levels and coordination between those efforts is important in achieving results. It also reflects that water quality challenges faced by one watershed can vary significantly from the challenges in other areas of the state.

CCAO has studied Ohio's water quality challenges for several years now through the work of its water quality task force. The task force is comprised of CCAO members from across the state who are interested in improving water quality in their communities and the state at-large. The work of the task force confirms that there are different drivers of water quality challenges and potential solutions, and these can change significantly from county to county.



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Ohio counties work in conjunction with soil and water conservation districts, OSU Extension, the agriculture industry, institutions of higher education, and local, state and federal governments to address the unique water quality challenges in their communities. From counties along Lake Erie's coast to counties bordering the Ohio River and all points in between, counties look to their partners for flexibility and cooperation in tackling the unique challenges they face. This bill will help ensure that flexibility can be maintained while coordination of efforts is strengthened.

CCAO thanks the bill's sponsors for introducing this legislation the association looks forward to working with them to help promote cleaner water across Ohio and its counties.