



# Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

**Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 2  
Before the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Matt Peart, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice- President of the  
Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
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Chairman Vitale, Vice-chair Kick, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 2. We also wish to thank Senator Peterson for his work on this bill.

My name is Matt Peart, and I am the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice - President of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and a farmer from Wayne County. I know many of you have great relationships with Soil and Water Districts in your communities, but in our 88 soil and water districts we pride ourselves on being “boots on the ground” to get essential conservation work accomplished. Our districts are “locally-led,” meaning districts serve to address conservation, agriculture, natural resource and environmentally-based issues in their communities.

On behalf of the Federation and our Soil and Water Conservation Districts, we are supportive of Senate Bill 2 for many reasons. While our local districts have many trained, talented individuals on staff, we recognize the need for additional resources that are trained in nutrient and water management. This bill will provide additional staff that can focus on those best management practices that will help us in crafting programs to make a meaningful difference in water quality.

Senate Bill 2 also addresses the need for watershed coordinators throughout the entire state, not just in those areas that are garnering so much attention. Water quality improvement is something we need to address as an entire state – and we need to strive to put best management practices in place before we have an issue. As we have all heard it said many times, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

For the past year, the Federation has proudly worked along side our friends in the agricultural commodity groups and our partners in the environmental community to focus on solutions to our water quality challenges. The work hasn't been easy – but the effort has been amazing. This eclectic group has managed to put rhetoric aside and work together for meaningful progress in our next steps to bring solutions to the table. We, as a Federation, have a lot of hope that progress can be made when these parties can come together in productive conversation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the committee. I would be happy to entertain any questions.