



Lake Erie Foundation  
Matt Fisher, Vice President  
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 2  
Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

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Chairman Vitale, Vice Chairman Kick, Ranking Member Denson and members of the Committee, I am Matt Fisher with the Lake Erie Foundation and I am here today as a proponent of Senate Bill 2.

Last month I testified as a proponent of Senate Bill 2 and in my testimony I stated that the provisions of Senate Bill 2 complement H2Ohio and will make H2Ohio more effective. We respect the Governor and his administration for their efforts with H2Ohio and continue to be impressed with the leadership that is being demonstrated to improve Ohio's waterways. The Department of Agriculture is holding well-attended meetings regarding H2Ohio as we speak. But H2Ohio offers incentives to **all** farmers who implement these practices as long as they are not getting incentives from other programs. Senate Bill 2 enables the Soil and Water district coordinators to focus on **impaired fields** so that resources are directed to the fields in greatest need. Senate Bill 2 also provides for a **pilot watershed** which provides incremental resources to a confined geographic area and after 2 -4 years of measuring water quality downstream this pilot will show which practices are most effective. This pilot will also give us a much better idea how much it will cost to remediate the waterways of NW Ohio, including Lake Erie and ultimately all of Ohio.

Since last month's hearing there are now 2 additional issues that reinforce the need of passing Senate Bill 2 to show improvement in clean waterways in Ohio.

First, this past Thursday Ohio EPA announced that they would be setting TMDLs for the mouth of the Maumee. TMDL stands for Total Daily Maximum Load, and the ultimate TMDL number is basically a target for pollution levels that would be set in 2 years. This obviously puts a greater spotlight on the progress of the implementation of these key management practices. But we will not aggressively lower the pollution levels of the Maumee without focusing on impaired fields; Senate Bill 2 provides the provisions to focus on these impaired fields and the farming community will need the resources that will hopefully come with Senate Bill 2 to show progress on reducing nutrient run off.

The second point is that Lake Erie Foundation supports the amendments to Senate bill 2 that have been submitted by the Ohio Farm Bureau. The most significant amendment is the

requirement of confidentiality of information from farmers. As we have said before, we are 100% against the Lake Erie Bill of Rights, and we will not make progress if farmers do not feel confident that they can provide their data without some type of legal action if the data indicates some level of likelihood of run off.

I want to emphasize that the Pilot study that is written into Senate Bill 2 is now an even more valuable and important method of determining success levels of the practices as outlined in H2Ohio. The pilot study will allow these learnings to be realized at a much lower cost and with better measurement of performance in downstream monitoring of the water at the base of the watershed.

Senate Bill 2 can turn into a game changer for making H2Ohio a success and allowing our agriculture partners to meet the TMDLs that will be created.

While H2OHIO certainly has good intentions and possibly some improvements, the focused pilot project would ultimately provide clearly defined protocols and structure, complemented by defined ROI measurements and input costs. It would be measured, accurate and provide desperately needed clarity to so many theories and outright speculation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this important issue and I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.