



House Finance Committee
House Bill 7 – Proponent Written Testimony

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Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 7. My name is Doug Spencer, and I have served as an Auglaize County Commissioner for over 12 years. I am also active in the County Commissioners Association of Ohio where I serve as Co-Chair of the CCAO Water Quality Task Force.

The Water Quality Task Force brings together county commissioners and county council members to study Ohio's water quality challenges and to discuss policy options to improve water quality across the state. Members of the task force represent counties bordering Lake Erie, Grand Lake St. Marys, and many waterways in between. This diversity helps provide CCAO with a broad lens with which to view water quality issues. The water quality challenges faced by some counties look different from the challenges faced in other counties, and the potential solutions to these challenges need to be equally diverse.

CCAO is pleased to see the introduction of House Bill 7 which would establish the H2Ohio Trust Fund to help make the necessary investments to protect, preserve and restore Ohio's lakes and rivers. CCAO maintains that improving water quality will require significant state investment for an extended period of time to see water quality improvement.

The bill establishes the H2Ohio Advisory Council and the H2Ohio Endowment Board to manage and administer the fund. The Advisory Council, comprised of 18 individuals representing diverse industries and geographic locations, will help ensure that water quality challenges and potential solutions from across the state are heard. The up to \$50 million per year disbursements from the fund will likely not solve our water quality challenges immediately, but the investment will pay future dividends toward the health of our rivers, lakes and streams. Ohio's water quality challenges did not develop



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overnight. Therefore, it is good to see that the H2Ohio Trust Fund should be able to fund water quality improvements for many years to come.

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

I thank the members of the committee for their consideration of my testimony.