



ALLIANCE *for the*  
**GREAT LAKES**

**Interested Party Testimony for HB 7 - H2Ohio Endowment Trust Fund  
Presented to the House Finance Committee  
Crystal M.C. Davis, Policy Director, Alliance for the Great Lakes  
May 29, 2019**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and Members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today on HB 7. My name is Crystal M.C. Davis and I am the Policy Director for the Alliance for the Great Lakes.

From avid boaters and coastal business owners to the citizens who rely on their tap for clean water, Lake Erie is the unifier that brings all Ohioans together. Our state's economy, health and future depends on our ability to protect and preserve our greatest natural resource. Toxic harmful algal blooms created by agricultural pollution plague the western basin of Lake Erie and need immediate attention. At the Alliance, we are committed to supporting policy, community and business solutions that bring us closer to achieving phosphorus reduction goals.

The Alliance is the oldest Great Lakes organization devoted 100 percent to the lakes. Our professional staff works with scientists, policymakers, businesses, community groups and everyday citizens to protect and restore the world's largest surface freshwater resource. From forging forward-looking Great Lakes policies to promoting Great Lakes education to on-the-ground efforts to improve thousands of miles of Great Lakes shoreline, we've been out front and behind the scenes caring for the lakes for almost 50 years.

We applaud both the legislature and Governor DeWine for making water quality improvement a priority issue this session. This is demonstrated in HB 7 and the other H2Ohio proposals that make significant investments that will lead to the protection and preservation of Ohio's water quality. We appreciate the permanent trust structure which creates a generational plan that is protected from being raided by future general assemblies. Addressing the threats facing our most precious natural resource deserve to take precedence for as long as the problems persist.

The H2Ohio Advisory Council is an admirable step that allows for limited accountability. While we appreciate the additional oversight in determining how funds are spent, more accountability is needed to ensure that disbursement of these funds leads to improved water quality outcomes.

While we value this proposal, we also have questions and concerns about the source of initial funding for the endowment, the amount of funds (compared to the Governor's proposed version) and the need for funding eligibility criteria that holds recipients accountable for clean water results. We are looking forward to working with you and the other stakeholders to address these concerns and strengthen the language and impact of this bill.

Chairman Oelslager and Members of the House Finance Committee, thank for the opportunity to testify before this committee today on HB 7. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns. Thank you!