



State Rep. Kent Smith
8th District
Commerce and Labor Committee Testimony on HJR 5
November 16, 2016

Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Driehaus and members of the House Finance Committee.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide written sponsor testimony in support of HJR 5 as I have a legislative conflict and am unable to be present before the Ohio House Finance Committee this morning.

HJR 5 would allow for a March 15, 2016, special election (a date that we would gladly change) to give Ohio voters the opportunity to favorably pass an issue that would allow the State of Ohio to issue \$1 billion in state general obligation bonds to fund sewer and water capital improvement grants. The \$1 billion in grants would awarded over a 10-year period of time – no more than \$100 million a year.

Water infrastructure is aging and often inefficient. A Brookings Institute study from September 2016 reported that water system leaks are now wasting more than a trillion gallons of water each year. The US EPA 2011 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey reported that Ohio's 20-year need is \$12.2 billion dollars. A 2008 US EPA report found that Ohio's wastewater and sewer systems need \$15.5 billion in repairs / upgrades.

If voters approve this measure, the General Assembly would determine the process for how the grants would be awarded. Projects would be limited to waste water treatment systems; water supply systems; storm water and sanitary collection, storage and treatment facilities.

These dollars will lead to cleaner drinking water, the alleviation of environmental hazards and further protection of Ohio's natural resources. Plus, HJR 5 has the potential to create thousands of jobs across the State of Ohio which will improve the overall economic welfare of the State.

Again, thank you to Chair Smith and the members of the Finance Committee to entertain written testimony in support of HJR 5.