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February 21, 2017

The Honorable Troy Balderson
Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Senate Bill 2

Dear Chairman Balderson:

This letter is being provided in support of Senate Bill 2, which updates environmental protection laws. The Association of Ohio Health Commissioners fully supports the bill and the proposed revisions. Overall, the bill works toward improving water quality in Ohio and protecting the environment in regards to landfills and proper disposal of construction and demolition debris which can improve the health of all Ohioans.

The water quality revisions strive to protect the recreational water resources of Ohioans by strengthening protections of Lake Erie and the surrounding watershed and further regulating the use of dredged materials. The revisions further protect drinking water systems by enhancing regulations on privately owned water systems and their operators. The revisions also strengthen requirements for public water systems to ensure they are capable of providing ongoing technical, financial, and managerial capability of water systems by implementing an asset management program. Given the recent concerns over drinking water systems these revisions support providing safe drinking water to all residents.

The bill also supports protection of the environment through the Ohio EPA in dealing with abandoned landfills and the cleanup that needs to occur to protect the health of the public. The bill adds new laws concerning the regulatory authority of construction and demolition debris (C&DD) processing facilities. Members of our association have had direct concerns over these unregulated facilities that are currently operating under no licensure or oversight. The facilities currently argue that they are "processing" or "recycling" the materials so they do not meet the requirements of a C&DD landfill. The only way to currently regulate the facilities is under public health nuisance laws which only address issues where refuse and other materials are being mixed in with the materials. Currently, nothing addresses runoff or drainage on the sites, site locations, closure plans, record keeping, fire protection and overall operations at these sites currently operating throughout Ohio. This bill ensures regulatory oversight to protect the environment.

We believe SB 333 strengthens the continued environmental safety of Ohio residents and works to improve the health of the population. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Beth E. Bickford'.

Beth Bickford, MS, RN, CAE
Executive Director