



**Ohio Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Testimony**

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Authority**

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Chairman Balderson, Vice Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 51.

- In 2005, following several years' worth of stakeholder meetings, public input sessions, and community fundraising, Lake County finalized its Coastal Development Plan. The process had been managed by the County's Planning Commission with the guidance of a citizens' committee representing all the lakefront communities in the County.
 - The plan focused on documenting the conditions of the county's shoreline, as well as its major public access points, and what could be done to protect and enhance those opportunities.
 - In 2006, the Landside Communities Plan was released, which built on the previous plan by exploring the opportunities for private investment based around the public access sites examined in the first plan. The opportunities were amenities such as lakefront restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and residential and commercial space.
 - While implementation of these plans was delayed by the recession of 2008, the Lake County Ohio Port and Economic Development Authority was directed to undertake implementation of the Plans in 2013 by the County Commissioners.
- As mentioned before, one original goal of the Coastal Development Plan was shoreline protection. While new recreational opportunities like beach parks and restaurants are exciting, none of them are possible where the shoreline is in danger of eroding. Anything that can be done to protect the lakeshore's natural integrity in an ecologically sound manner will go a long way in ensuring that this priceless public resource will be available to future generations.
- Erosion is a concern across Ohio's Lake Erie shore, and this legislation is timely in that we are in an era of increased public appreciation for, and attention to, protecting Lake Erie, one of the state's greatest resources.
 - While the Port Authority's work is generally centered in areas where the lakeshore is publicly owned, this accounts for only a minority portion of the County's lakeshore. Public areas along the lake benefit too when private property is protected because it prevents a chain reaction of weakened conditions.

- Private owners acting individually encounter great difficulty, both in project cost and navigating regulatory hurdles. The individual investment in erosion control on the lakefront can be very high, and the options for financing these improvements are generally very limited, and many owners often have to take out additional mortgages on their properties. Further, the approval process can be a long and complex one, and many owners do not have the time or resources to manage it alone.
 - By joining together in a SID and committing to the special assessment for the life of the SID, these owners can access long-term financing, which will help to ensure that projects undertaken are of lasting quality as opposed to series of low-cost, short term band-aid projects. And by partnering with their local government agencies, these properties owners can receive help in working through the approval processes of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

In Lake County, we have 31 miles of shoreline, but only 6 miles are publicly owned. Anything we can do to assist in the preservation of the private property helps to protect the public investment. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to speak today on this important legislation.