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SENATOR RANDY GARDNER

Senate Majority Floor Leader

Sponsor Testimony – Clean Lake 2020 Plan

Senate Bill 299

Senate Finance Committee – May 15, 2018

Mr. Chairman. Members of the Senate Finance Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 299 – the Clean Lake 2020 Plan. I am especially pleased to be joined by my respected colleague, Senator Sean O’Brien, as our efforts for a healthier Lake Erie are clearly bipartisan and bicameral.

The Clean Lake 2020 plan has taken on a sense of urgency in 2018. Already this calendar year, a number of actions have taken place that require us to work together to bolster our current strategies to reduce phosphorus loading in the Western Lake Erie Basin. Ohio has agreed to reduce phosphorus loading by 40% by 2025, with an aspirational goal of 20% by the year 2020, but recent reports indicate our efforts so far will not yield results positive enough to meet our commitment under the binational water quality agreement.

The Clean Lake 2020 Plan is not a mandate bill. This is a funding authorization bill, providing both GRF and capital funding for a variety of strategies that scientists, Lake Erie advocates, agriculture leaders and others believe can help us achieve our phosphorus reduction goals.

- **Ohio State Sea Grant/Stone Lab: \$2.65 million Capital Funds.** Capital funds shall be utilized for new 3,800 square feet of research lab space, in addition to purchasing in-lake monitoring equipment consisting of real-time buoys and water-treatment plant monitoring devices.

- **Healthy Lake Erie Initiative: Up to \$10 million Capital Funds.** Additional investment (on top of the \$10 million in the just-passed Capital Appropriations Act) to support projects to enhance efforts to reduce open lake disposal of dredged materials into Lake Erie by 2020, according to current Ohio law.
- **Soil & Water Conservation Support Fund: Up to \$3.5 million GRF.** GRF funds to support county soil and water conservation districts in the Western Lake Erie Basin for staffing and to assist in soil testing, nutrient management plan development including manure transformation and manure conversion technologies, enhanced filter strips and water management, and other conservation support.
- **Targeted Phosphorus Reduction. Up to \$20 million Capital Funds.** The Ohio Department of Agriculture, in consultation with the Lake Erie Commission and the Ohio Soil & Water Commission, shall establish programs to assist in meeting reduce total phosphorus and dissolved reactive phosphorus in subwatersheds of the Western Lake Erie Basin. Priority shall be given to those subwatersheds determined to be highest in total phosphorus and dissolved reactive phosphorus nutrient loading. Programs shall include, but not be limited to, capital funds for purchasing of equipment for subsurface placement of nutrients into the soil, equipment for nutrient placement based on GIS soil testing and variable rate technology, water management efforts, manure conversion technologies, additional tributary monitoring, and edge-of-field drainage structures.

While legitimate debate continues with respect to specific policy changes and potential regulatory mandates, we believe the Clean Lake 2020 Plan is at least part of the answer. I sincerely and respectfully ask the Senate and House to consider prompt action.