



Ohio's "6119" Regional Water & Sewer Districts

May 28, 2019

Chairman Hoagland
Ranking Member O'Brien
Members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

Re: Support for Amendments to SB 2

Dear Chairman Hoagland Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide written comments on behalf of the Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts (CORD) in support of amendments being drafted to SB 2. This committee has already heard from numerous witnesses on the importance of protecting Ohio's water resources. Our members applaud the Senate for its efforts in addressing Ohio's water quality issues, which includes the introduction of SB 2, creating a statewide watershed planning and management program.

CORD is a non-profit association established to assist, protect, and advance the interests of Ohio's regional water and sewer districts, also known as "6119 Districts" since they are established under Chapter 6119 of the Ohio Revised Code. 6119 Districts provide potable water, sanitary sewer, and storm water services to over 1 million customers in the State of Ohio.

CORD's members want to be viewed as a resource in the legislature's efforts to improve water quality in Ohio. With that in mind, we asked our members for creative approaches state lawmakers could take to provide regional water and wastewater districts with additional flexibility to improve water quality as well as their services to customers. From that initial inquiry we developed a list of revisions to ORC 6119, that we believe are in line with the state's efforts to address water quality issues. I have highlighted those suggestions below:

ORC 6119.06 & 6119.09 – Currently, regional (6119) districts are able to incentivize and coordinate with other political subdivisions on the acquisition or construction of water resource projects. Prime examples are water and sewer line extensions, water management and green infrastructure projects. Unfortunately, 6119 districts do not have the flexibility to coordinate with private entities on similar projects. Revisiting these sections to afford regional districts that ability would help encourage cooperation with, and participation by, private entities in the accomplishment of such projects.

ORC 6119.091 – 6119 districts are currently authorized to offer discount programs to their customers, if the district board of trustees chooses to do so. However, current language is ambiguous as to whether such programs are limited to individuals over the age of 65. The proposed amendment is intended to clarify that districts may provide discount programs to qualifying customers of any age, if a district board chooses to establish such programs.

Our members are encouraged by the commitment Ohio's lawmakers have shown in addressing water quality concerns by introducing proposals like SB 2. We look forward to the work ahead on this and any other proposal aimed at improving water quality in Ohio.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate CORD's support for the amendments being proposed to SB 2 and the work this chamber has done in developing innovative solutions to the water quality problems facing the state.

Sincerely,



John B. Albers
Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts (CORD)
Executive Committee Member