



ALLEN COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH
Allen County Combined Health District

May 9, 2022

Chairman Wiggam
77 South High Street
13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

To the Honorable Chairman Wiggam,

I am writing you today to voice my opposition to the proposed House Bill 463 that would eliminate the District Advisory Council (DAC). As a Health Commissioner that has been in this role for less than a year, the District Advisory Council plays a vital role in shaping the mission, vision and values of the health district as a whole.

In Allen County, the District Advisory Council meets twice a year, once in March and a second time in September/October, to present the activities that have occurred in the health district, what opportunities or challenges we see coming in the future, to appoint or re-appoint members to the Board of Health, and to present our budget to the group for the upcoming year. Council meetings in 2020 and 2021 were challenging but presented the cities, villages and townships within our jurisdiction the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers about COVID-19 from their local health department.

When a proposed 2022 budget was presented to the DAC, which included a 4% increase in funding from members of the DAC, the membership of the DAC voiced their opposition to the increase. After months of re-working our budget we were able to come back to the group in the fall and notify them that funding from the townships, villages and cities would remain flat from 2021 into 2022. Additionally, members of the DAC expressed concern over the fees charged to homeowners for their septic systems in our Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Program during our fall 2021 meeting. The concern was over a \$12 annual fee to maintain the system in our O&M Program. The group voiced a desire to extend this renewal period for home owners from a 1 year renewal to a 5 year renewal cycle. At this time we are getting very close to implementing this renewal cycle for septic systems based on the feedback we received from the DAC. This back and forth discussion between individuals representing our townships, villages and cities allows us to better identify the needs of the residents in the community.





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The DAC works well in Allen County. The system for appointing members to the Board of Health is not broken in the manner that was described during previous hearings. We have been working with local healthcare organizations to identify a physician to join the Board for over 5 months and have only had one individual express strong interest in joining in this role. Additionally, appointees from the DAC are properly vetted by the members of the local DAC and appointed during public meetings following all of the requirements of the state Sunshine Laws.

While the process for the DAC works, I would strongly recommend that in further consideration of this bill that the sponsors work with the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) to identify potential improvements to the process of the District Advisory Council. If you would like to discuss any of these concerns please do not hesitate to reach out to me by email at bfischer@allenhealthdept.org or by phone at 419-228-4457.

Thank you,



Brandon Fischer
Allen County Public Health
Health Commissioner

