

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee regarding HB 175 - Deregulation of Ephemeral Waters. My name is Margaret Branstrator and I am a retired science teacher. In addition to teaching Environmental Science at the college level in Indiana, I served on the Aquifer Advisory Committee for the City of Richmond Indiana and helped develop their Aquifer Protection Overlay Zoning Ordinance in the late 1990s.

I am writing to OPPOSE HB 175.

Ephemeral waters form the headwaters of most watersheds and are vitally important for maintaining the quality and quantity of water in the rest of the watershed. Any pollution will find its way downstream eventually.

Ephemeral streams are also important areas of infiltration for the groundwater that feeds the rest of the watershed. They reduce downstream flooding during sudden, intense rain events. These are the very kinds of changes to precipitation that are predicted to increase due to climate change. We have already seen some of these precipitation changes in Ohio.

The NPDES permit system, part of the Clean Water Act, has been very successful in reducing point-source pollution – the kind that led to the fires on the Cuyahoga River during my childhood. This success was because ALL discharges were regulated – not just the larger, more visible discharges.

To clean up the kinds of pollution that have devastated parts of the Great Lakes and Grand Lake St. Marys and caused drinking water crises in Toledo – non-point source pollution – we need to look at ENTIRE watersheds – not just the most visible parts. If certain sections of the watershed are exempt from regulation, we will never achieve the goals of the H2Ohio Program or the multistate Great Lakes Initiative.

Please vote NO on HB 175.