



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE ENERGY AND PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

OPPONENT TESTIMONY

SENATE BILL 193

May 17, 2022

Chairman McColley, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee, on behalf of our 730 member municipalities, my name is Thomas Wetmore and I am the Legislative Advocate for the Ohio Municipal League. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 193. As you know, the legislation would prohibit the adequate and effective enforcement measures currently employed by Ohio municipalities to recoup unpaid water infrastructure services by preempting the ability to impose water and sewer liens on both residential or commercial properties when services have been rendered and payment has been non-existent.

It is important to share with you that municipalities across the state use the placement of liens against property owners for unpaid water services as a measure of last resort and have robust outreach programs to contact property owners who are delinquent on their contractual obligations to resolve outstanding issues and to come to resolution that is in the property owners best interest while preserving the rights of the other utility customers.

Adequate collection efforts that are in current statute not only help to protect the already disrupted budgets of Ohio cities and villages from those that do not pay for services they are provided such as water and sewer, garbage collection services and others municipal amenities but also provide for a basic level of fairness to all other commercial and residential utility customers in the community that meet their financial obligations and pay their bill. The investment made in municipal water systems is significant and has a tremendous impact on the overall budget of communities to operate, upgrade and maintain, especially related to evolving Ohio and US EPA water quality requirements and standards. If these investments by municipalities are not supported by water and sewer usage rates adequate to finance the service and effective collection resources and authorities to recover the incurred usage charges, then all of the rate payers in the system are saddled with the challenge of increased usage rates or reduced services.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, your vote **against** SB 193 is a vote **for** all of the cities and villages in your districts who work every day to provide reliable, affordable water and sewer services to the businesses and residents of their community and is a vote for the municipal customers who meet their financial obligations by paying for the services they use every day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be happy to take any questions you may have

Sincerely,


Thomas J Wetmore, II
Legislative Advocate
Ohio Municipal League