

Testimony of Bryan Stubbs  
Executive Director, Cleveland Water Alliance  
Ohio Senate Finance Committee  
May 18, 2021

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and Members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Bryan Stubbs. I am the Executive Director of Cleveland Water Alliance, a state-wide water-technology economic development organization. Our founder, a life-long Clevelander, helped create the organization's name, but our reach is certainly state-wide.

As Ohio works to revitalize the economy from the devastation of the coronavirus pandemic, it's important to remember the state's unique economic tool that is ready to be capitalized upon: the water economy. The Water Economy represents one of the rising economic stars in Ohio, enjoying greater job creation than aerospace, bio health and advanced manufacturing.

The Cleveland Water Alliance was formed 5 years ago to foster water technology acceleration programs for new and existing companies. We bring together the business community, utilities (water and sewer) and academics to ignite the job-creating potential of Ohio's water resources. We believe that Ohio has vast potential to harness the water economy and create an entirely new industry here. According to a McKinsey study conducted last year, a modest investment in the water economy in Ohio is expected to return \$5.3B in added market share to regional companies while taking Ohio's share of the global water economy market from 9 to 14 percent.

The role of water in our society is critical. Just read the news to see the harm and hardship that comes from drought and deteriorating water quality concerns around the country. In the Midwest, we are largely insulated from these problems because of our plentiful, safe, freshwater. But we are not immune.

We had a scare when harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie near Toledo made the water undrinkable for 400,000 people for a period of time in 2014. This magnified the importance of keeping a clean Lake Erie for all. Buckeye Lake in central Ohio has had toxic algal blooms every year since 2010, according to the Ohio EPA, and the Ohio River has experienced them as well.

One goal of ours is to work with the State of Ohio to invest in water-related technologies that can improve water quality throughout all of Ohio's ecosystem while creating jobs. The U.S. Economic Development Administration recently awarded us a \$600,000 Build to Scale Industry Challenge grant that will provide innovators the ability to conceive of, test, scale-up and demonstrate innovative water technology directly with customers. This was the only grant not awarded on the coasts. Ohio is primed to accelerate in this area—we are seeking state support to match the federal investment thus far.

Ohio is already a leading home for water innovation on a global scale. Just look at businesses like Moen and Oatey in Northeast Ohio, or YSI/Xylem in Yellow Springs. In Cincinnati, there has

been federal investment with the Ohio EPA's Test and Evaluation Facility to study new treatment technologies for contaminants in water and wastewater. So what more is needed?

We are seeking support of an amendment to House Bill 110 that would fund \$600,000 in each of FY 2022 and FY 2023 for the Cleveland Water Alliance Sustainable Water Technologies Initiative. This funding would mirror the USEDA grant and would allow more technologies to be brought to scale, and truly seed a new water economy here in Ohio. State support would allow us to scale and grow a robust, systematic testbed infrastructure for prototyping, testing, piloting and launching innovative water technologies and processes within municipal and utility settings; Lake Erie/Watershed settings; and industrial and energy water-use environments.

Other Midwest states are already directly investing in this area. Wisconsin is investing \$750k annually on water technology industry promotion, Illinois invests \$700k annually on the water technology industry and Michigan is currently investing in this space at \$450k annually.

We truly believe Ohio is poised to be national freshwater innovation capital. We have a high concentration of industry, assets and expertise – resulting in an estimated 10% of global market today. We believe that state support to match both Federal and Local investments can support innovation and create a robust water economy throughout the state.

Thank you for your time today. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.