

Testimony before the Ohio House Economic and Workforce Development Committee in support of H.B. 469 to Create the Ohio River Commission of Ohio

Paul Worley, Director, Adams County Economic Development

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Chairman Lorenz, Vice Chair Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and Members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for allowing me to offer sponsor testimony on H.B. 469, which would create the Ohio River Commission. My name is Paul Worley, and I am the Director for Economic Development in Adams County.

The Ohio River is a vital resource, and its multiple uses—from shipping and transportation to recreation and conservation—require careful coordination. Without such coordination, we risk prioritizing one group’s interests over the well-being of others. The Ohio River Commission would ensure that the river’s use is balanced, fair, and environmentally sound.

Importantly, the Commission should include all state agencies involved with the river and be led by the Ohio Department of Development, as it focuses on economic development and tourism. This leadership will help maximize the river’s potential as an economic driver for Ohio.

In Adams County, we’ve seen the Ohio River already support significant economic activity, including large-scale shipments and the growth of a regional port. These efforts, such as Intel’s use of the Adams Ohio River Transit Access (AORTA) Port for superloads, demonstrate the vast opportunities the river offers.

Moreover, the redevelopment of former power plant sites and other industrial sites along the Ohio River presents a unique opportunity to revitalize underused areas, turning them into hubs for industrial, commercial, and recreational development.

In conclusion, the Ohio River Commission will help us proactively manage, coordinate, and protect this valuable resource. I urge the committee to support this important initiative to create the Ohio River Commission of Ohio.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.