



# OEHA

OHIO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 234  
COLUMBUS, OH 43216-0234  
WWW.OHIOEHA.ORG

**HB 207 Proponent Testimony  
Presented by Dustin Kent, President  
Ohio Environmental Health Association  
House Public Health Policy Committee  
Chairman Adam Mathews  
June 5, 2024**

Chairman Mathews, Vice Chairman Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Public Health Policy Committee my name is Dustin Kent, and I am President of the Ohio Environmental Health Association. The Ohio Environmental Health Association represents nearly 475 Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS), commonly called health inspectors, and other environmental health industry partners and practitioners throughout our state. I am here today to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 207, which seeks to clearly designate the regulatory responsibilities regarding special use pools in Ohio.

Currently, depending on where special use pools are located, the licensing and inspection responsibility for these facilities may solely fall under the Ohio Department of Agriculture to regulate as aquatic amusement rides, or Local Health Departments as special use pools with special features under the authority of the Ohio Department of Health. The critical elements within these types of facilities are structural and mechanical features as well as water quality. The expertise of the Department of Agriculture are structural and mechanical, and the expertise of Health is water quality to prevent waterborne illness. Unfortunately, Ohio's current regulatory structure leaves out one of these critical agencies which is what HB 207 seeks to correct.

The Department of Agriculture has the expertise for the structure and mechanical features of amusement rides and they do a good job governing those standards. The harm caused by the failure of a structure and / or mechanical components can cause severe injury and harm to affected individuals, and we acknowledge that this is not the expertise of our members. However, Registered Environmental Health Specialists have professional expertise in water quality, and as such we firmly believe that Local Health Departments should have authority in this area to ensure all aspects of these facilities are appropriately reviewed by those with the proper training and expertise. A waterborne illness can be spread to many individuals in either a short or long period of time. The operation of the water quality equipment and chemicals would determine how long a condition of transmitting waterborne illness would exist. A waterborne illness could be spread by individuals to other individuals, to other bodies of water within the same facility, or to other facilities in the community further spreading disease.

In short, the state of Ohio should use the expertise of the professionals performing their critical roles in their respective disciplines. Agriculture should have authority for structural and mechanical features. Local Health Department REHS' should have authority on water quality. This will ensure facilities operate safely and protect the public's health and safety. This is sound policy for Ohio businesses and families when they visit their local water parks.

Chairman Mathews and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. At this time, I will answer any questions the members of the committee may have.