

Testimony of Cleveland Water Alliance  
House Development Committee  
February 26, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of the Cleveland Water Alliance (CWA).

My name is Bryan Stubbs, and I am the Executive Director and President of Cleveland Water Alliance. While Cleveland is part of our name, our work extends throughout the entire state as we promote Ohio's leadership in what is referred to as the "blue economy" — understanding that water is not only a vital resource but also a catalyst for economic growth. From the shores of Lake Erie to the Ohio River Valley, CWA has united businesses, utilities, research institutions, and policy makers to enhance Ohio's position as a global leader in water innovation. Through the creation of testbed infrastructure, technology acceleration programs, and collaborative partnerships, we are ensuring that Ohio stays at the forefront of solutions to urgent water challenges while forging new economic opportunities in the process.

Ohio has long recognized the importance of investing in water innovation. Thanks to the leadership of this legislature and Governor DeWine's administration, the state has supported our work over the past two budget cycles, enabling us to attract businesses, pilot projects, and investments into our region. One such example is last year, we facilitated a \$6m pilot to Avon Lake Regional Water — the first location in North America to utilize a cutting-edge on-site chlorine generating system, keeping volatile chemicals off of trains and ships, saving rate payers costs, and generating revenue for the utility. We've assisted Ohio-based companies garner millions of dollars in funding to develop and anchor their products in Ohio as well.

Funding from the State of Ohio also allowed us to develop a network of freshwater testbeds that have turned Ohio into a hub for water technology and a destination for global companies. We created the largest digitally connected freshwater system in the world over Lake Erie, and our "smart buoys" provide real-time data on water quality throughout the Lake Erie watershed. These real time data sensors will be deployed along the Ohio River, within the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, and the Sandusky Bay as well. I would be remiss not to mention our nutrient mitigation work with farmers in the state, made possible via funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

The impact of these investments is evident. Ohio has quickly established itself as a leading destination for water technology innovation, attracting companies from across the nation and around the globe to test, validate, and commercialize new solutions using our infrastructure. The demand for these testbeds continues to rise, and with ongoing investment, Ohio has the chance to stake claim in its position as a global leader in freshwater technology.

To build on this momentum, we are requesting \$750,000 per year to support the ongoing expansion of our testbed infrastructure. This funding will enable us to improve our real-time

monitoring capabilities, broaden the reach of our sensor networks, and enhance our capacity to support industrial water efficiency initiatives. As Ohio is increasingly recognized as an appealing destination thanks to its abundant water resources and strong innovation ecosystem, the ability to provide a world-class water technology validation platform further strengthens Ohio's competitive edge.

The importance of continued investment in water innovation cannot be overstated. States that proactively develop thoughtful water solutions will be well positioned to lead in the economy of the future. Ohio has already taken significant steps toward establishing itself as the freshwater capital of the world, and we now have an opportunity to accelerate that progress. By further supporting CWA, the state is not only investing in cutting-edge research and technology but also in economic development, workforce growth, and business attraction.

We are grateful for the support from the state, and we appreciate your consideration of this request. Ohio has a unique opportunity to shape the future of the global water economy, and ongoing investment will ensure that we remain at the forefront of innovation. Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.