

## Committees

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## 95<sup>th</sup> House District

Noble, Harrison, Morgan, and  
portions of Belmont, Guernsey,  
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## State Representative Ty Moore

### Sponsor Testimony

**Good afternoon Chair Robb-Blasdel, Vice-Chair Fischer, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 603, Prohibit certain clauses from conservancy district contracts.**

There are over 20 Conservancy Districts in Ohio. They help enhance our quality of life (recreation and flood management-MWCD). This is an extension of County laws to the Conservancy Districts.

The bill is a "Consumer Protection" law for the government. It prevents Conservancy Districts from signing away their legal rights in business contracts.

Conservancy districts will no longer be able to agree to:

- **Indemnification/Hold Harmless:** The District cannot promise to pay for a company's legal mistakes. If a contractor messes up and gets sued, the District isn't allowed to "shield" them using taxpayer money.
- **Out-of-State Legal Disputes:** The District cannot agree to go to court in another state (like Delaware or New York) if there is a fight. Legal disputes must stay in Ohio courts.
- **Liability Limits:** The District cannot agree to limit how much they can sue a company for if that company causes "bodily injury, death, or property damage" through negligence or misconduct.
- **Hidden Terms:** The District cannot be bound by terms they didn't know about.
- **Public Records Conflicts:** Any clause that would stop the District from following Ohio's Public Records Act is prohibited.
- **Contracts:** HB 603 enables conservancy districts in Ohio the ability to sign contracts with online platforms such as AirBnB or VRBO. Currently, certain government entities such as MWCD are prohibited to sign because the individual signer is held personally responsible.
- **This legislation** will allow conservancies to modernize their technology. \*It protects public officials from personal liability: Entering contracts with prohibited indemnification language could expose conservancy district officials to personal legal risk, something this legislation would help eliminate. Why Does This Matter? Without this bill, large corporations often use their "bargaining power" to force small government districts to accept risky terms. This bill essentially says: "If you want to do business with a Conservancy District in Ohio, you have to play by our rules and take responsibility for your own work."

**In closing, House Bill 603 strengthens conservancy districts' ability to enter into contracts confidently and responsibly. It ensures districts are protected from unfair or unlawful contract terms while keeping agreements enforceable and workable. By automatically invalidating prohibited clauses, the bill gives conservancy districts greater flexibility to work with modern vendors, protects public funds**

**and officials, and aligns districts with the contract safeguards already available to counties across Ohio.**

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide my sponsor testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions.