

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Thad Claggett
Chairman, Ohio House Technology and Innovation Committee
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Proponent Testimony on HB 646 – Data Center Study Commission

Chairman Claggett, Vice Chair Workman, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the Ohio House Technology and Innovation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 646, which creates the Ohio Data Center Study Commission. My name is Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS D).

NEORS D is the largest regional sewer district in Ohio, serving the City of Cleveland and 62 suburban communities. As a ratepayer-funded political subdivision of the State of Ohio, we are responsible for wastewater treatment facilities, regional stormwater management, and interceptor sewers. Our District is supported by 770 employees and operates 3 wastewater treatment plants. We manage 489 miles of regional stormwater system and 344 miles of sewers, serving over 1 million customers. NEORS D's mission is to provide progressive regional management of sewage and stormwater that protects the environment and serves our community.

NEORS D recognizes the need for responsible development throughout the State of Ohio and applauds the efforts of the sponsors and the committee to ensure that the proliferation of data centers in the state is done thoughtfully and strategically, while ensuring that human health and the environment remain protected. We are aware of potential large-scale data development projects in Northeast Ohio, such as the repurposing of the I-X Center into a data center. Additionally, we have been informed of other significant projects involving hyperscalers, large AI data centers. These developments highlight the increasing need for robust utility infrastructure and thoughtful environmental stewardship. The conversation on data centers cannot occur without a conversation on the broader utility infrastructure to support them. Data center development is of particular importance to NEORS D due to our regulatory authority over discharges to the NEORS D collection system and wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs).

As a publicly owned treatment work (POTW), NEORS D also regulates industrial discharges which may include data centers customers. These industrial discharges can impact the sewer system, WWTPs, and NEORS D's compliance with Ohio EPA Ohio EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

We are submitting this testimony today not only in support of the legislation and the Data Center Study Commission itself, but also to express our strong interest in participating in and serving on the Commission.

NEORSRSD is uniquely qualified to serve on the Commission based on our extensive knowledge of Lake Erie — the State’s most reliable source of fresh water — its involvement in large-scale industrial redevelopment efforts occurring in Northeast Ohio, its comprehensive understanding of interconnected infrastructure structures/systems. The District also maintains long-standing relationships with various business sectors with data center needs.

Our organization brings strong technical expertise to the Commission. NEORSRSD staff are highly experienced in regulatory matters, as both a regulator and as a regulated entity and are deeply engaged in environmental compliance. We understand the complex challenges associated with industrial development including impacts to the environment, utility rates, water use and supply, pollution sources and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence etc.

In addition, NEORSRSD has a long and successful history with collaborating with local, state and federal stakeholders. Our proactive approach to community engagement and education distinguishes us as a trusted partner. We also bring a broad-based water quality perspective to the Commission through our memberships and leadership positions with statewide and national trade water organizations such as the Association of Ohio Metropolitan Wastewater Agencies, (AOMWA), the Coalition of Regional Districts (CORD), Alliance for the Great Lakes, Cleveland Water Alliance, National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) etc.

As data center development accelerates across Ohio, early coordination with water and wastewater utilities is essential to avoid unintended environmental and infrastructure impacts. NEORSRSD would contribute practical insight on water use, wastewater impacts, and infrastructure capacity to help ensure data center development proceeds in a sustainable and cost-effective manner. We commit to working collaboratively with the Commission and other stakeholders on finding the best path forward for responsible data center development in the State.

Our team has worked tirelessly to preserve and protect Ohio’s freshwater resources and would be honored to represent the water utility sector on the Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this legislation. If you have any questions, please contact me at (216) 881-6600 ext. 6898 or dreyfuss-wellsk@neorsd.org or our Senior State and Federal Legislative Affairs Manager and Grants, Danielle Giannantonio at giannantoniod@neorsd.org or (440) 476-9910.

Sincerely,

Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells
Chief Executive Officer