

## **Final Testimony for Bryan Stubbs, Full Senate Finance Committee**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Bryan Stubbs, and I serve as the Executive Director and President of the Cleveland Water Alliance (CWA). While “Cleveland” is in our name, our work reaches well beyond Northeast Ohio. We exist to elevate Ohio’s position as a national and global leader in freshwater innovation, economic competitiveness, and sustainable water infrastructure. I’m here today to respectfully request your continued support for this work, which directly advances public health, environmental resilience, and Ohio’s economic future.

CWA unites businesses, utilities, research institutions, entrepreneurs, and government leaders around a shared mission: to accelerate innovation in the “blue economy.” Water is not only a basic human necessity—it’s one of our state’s most underleveraged economic assets. Through state-supported initiatives, we’ve developed a first-of-its-kind testbed infrastructure that enables companies and researchers to develop, test, and deploy real-world water technologies that solve urgent problems.

Thanks to the support of this legislature and Governor DeWine’s administration in previous budget cycles, Ohio has made remarkable strides. With past state funding, CWA built the largest digitally connected freshwater monitoring system in the world—offering real-time insights across the Lake Erie watershed. This infrastructure has already allowed us to detect harmful algal blooms before they contaminate drinking water, monitor recreational safety, and support local and regional decision-making with reliable environmental data.

We’ve also expanded into cutting-edge infrastructure testing. Our “pipe farm” in Parma, Ohio, enables utilities and manufacturers to evaluate next-generation, non-invasive technologies for identifying and replacing lead service lines. As cities nationwide race to comply with federal lead replacement mandates, Ohio is positioned to lead the way with solutions that are faster, safer, and more cost-effective.

The results of this work are clear: in the last two years, nearly 50 new technologies have been tested and validated through our network. We’ve welcomed international companies seeking to invest in Ohio, and our infrastructure has enabled entrepreneurs, large manufacturers, and public utilities alike to collaborate on solving 21st-century water challenges. This kind of momentum doesn’t happen by accident—it requires vision, infrastructure, and consistent investment.

To build on that momentum, we are respectfully requesting \$750,000 per year in this upcoming biennium to support continued expansion of our testbed infrastructure. This funding will allow us to scale our real-time monitoring systems, broaden the reach of our sensor networks across the state, and enhance our industrial water efficiency and innovation capabilities. As companies relocate from water-stressed regions, Ohio's water abundance combined with its leadership in technology validation gives us a clear competitive advantage.

But the opportunity is not just regional—it's global. As climate change, population growth, and industrial demand place unprecedented pressure on freshwater systems, states that prioritize innovation and sustainability in water management will be the ones leading future economic growth. Ohio has already taken that step. The Cleveland Water Alliance's work positions our state to be not just a participant in the global water economy—but a driver of it.

Continued state investment in our testbed infrastructure is about more than research. It is about workforce development, business attraction, environmental protection, and long-term resilience. We deeply appreciate your past support and ask that you continue to see this work as a smart, forward-looking investment in Ohio's future.

Thank you for your time, for your leadership, and for your continued dedication to policies that advance innovation and economic opportunity. I welcome your questions and would be glad to provide any additional information.