

Testimony for Bryan Stubbs, Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and Members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Bryan Stubbs, and I serve as the Executive Director and President of the Cleveland Water Alliance (CWA). While our name reflects our Northeast Ohio roots, the work we do stretches across the entire state. We are a statewide innovation network dedicated to positioning Ohio as a national and global leader in the “blue economy”—a rapidly growing sector that sees water not only as a natural resource but also as a key driver of economic development, public safety, and environmental resilience.

Our mission is to unite stakeholders—businesses, utilities, research institutions, startups, and government entities—to advance water innovation and infrastructure modernization. Through state support and strategic collaboration, we’ve built one of the most advanced freshwater testbed networks in the world. These platforms allow us to test, validate, and scale real-world water technologies that address some of the most urgent issues facing public systems today: drinking water safety, lead line detection, wastewater management, and real-time environmental monitoring.

Thanks to the support of this legislature and the leadership of Governor DeWine’s administration, previous state investment has enabled CWA to deploy the largest digitally connected freshwater monitoring system in the world. This system now provides real-time data across the Lake Erie watershed, allowing Ohio to detect harmful algal blooms before they impact drinking water, assess water quality for recreation, and provide critical insight to local governments and utilities. This data-driven approach strengthens transparency, risk management, and public trust in our infrastructure.

Our work also supports regulatory compliance and public cost-savings. In Parma, we’ve developed a “pipe farm” to test emerging, non-invasive technologies for identifying and replacing lead service lines. As federal requirements accelerate nationwide, this resource ensures Ohio is leading—not reacting—in developing safer and more efficient infrastructure replacement strategies. The implications for public health, environmental oversight, and fiscal stewardship are enormous.

The return on investment is already visible. Over the past two years, nearly 50 innovative technologies have been tested in our systems. We’ve drawn interest from global companies, supported local entrepreneurs, and created platforms for public-private partnerships that make government smarter and more responsive. These aren’t just tech pilots—they are field-ready solutions that help agencies do more with less and act proactively instead of reactively.

We are respectfully requesting continued support in this biennium: \$750,000 annually to build on this progress. This funding will allow us to grow our testbed footprint, expand our sensor networks statewide, and enhance our ability to support industrial water efficiency and environmental compliance. As water-intensive industries consider relocating from increasingly arid parts of the country, Ohio stands out not just for its abundant freshwater but for our leadership in water infrastructure innovation.

This committee plays a critical role in ensuring that taxpayer dollars are invested wisely, transparently, and for long-term public good. I believe this initiative aligns directly with that charge. CWA's work strengthens government accountability, improves public infrastructure management, and ensures Ohio remains ahead of the curve on critical water challenges.

Thank you again for your time and for your oversight of this important issue. I welcome your questions and would be glad to provide additional detail on any part of our work.