

**Senate Finance Committee
Am. Sub. HB 49
Richard Stuck, PG
Source Water Protection Manager
Greater Cincinnati Water Works**

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At Greater Cincinnati Water Works it is our mission to provide customers within our regional communities with a plentiful supply of the highest quality water and excellent services. GCWW supplies more than 48 billion gallons of water a year through 3,000 miles of water mains to about 1.1 million people. GCWW's service area includes the entire City of Cincinnati, most of Hamilton County and parts of Butler and Warren Counties in Ohio.

The general public and decision makers sometimes forget that surface water is the source of drinking water that comes out of many of our Ohio taps, and this is especially true for Cincinnati residents. Greater Cincinnati Water Works obtains water from two sources: the Ohio River and the Great Miami Aquifer. Our Miller Treatment Plant treats surface water from the Ohio River and supplies 88% of drinking water to our customers, including all of the City of Cincinnati.

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has classified the Ohio River as highly susceptible to contamination, as it has with all surface waters. Because the river is open to the environment, pollution will contaminate and spread quickly through the flow of the river. The Ohio River and its tributaries cut across many counties in Ohio, including those with oil and gas development, before the river reaches Cincinnati.

Nonetheless, we work tirelessly to protect our drinking water from contaminants present in the source water. One case of potential chemical contamination occurred during the summer of 2014 when a chemical fire

erupted at the Eisenbarth gas well site in Monroe County. In the case of this disaster, information with the identity of chemicals released into the Ohio River did not come until several days later. The initial reports for the spill included a description of a massive fish kill in Opossum Creek, a direct tributary to the Ohio River, so we were justifiably concerned. Obtaining information on the spill was the result of substantial effort on our part and on the part of the Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO). When we did finally get the chemical information it was incomplete.

GCWW has a number of options to remove contaminants from the water or to cease pumping water from the river altogether for a period of time without service interruptions to allow contaminants to flow past our intakes. Although these options are available, GCWW cannot ensure removal for contaminants which are unknown, and simply ceasing pumping until contaminants pass puts the system at risk due to limited water storage. The absence of timely, complete, and accurate information limits our ability to make the informed decisions and preparations required to protect the health and wellbeing of the almost 1.1 million people who consume our water. We are very sensitive to this issue and the need to have the full picture of any chemicals which make their way into our waterways. We need this information immediately after any accident, spill or release which affects our source water to allow as much time as possible to evaluate the situation and prepare appropriate responses.

It has come to our attention that under current state law, the identity of some trade secret chemicals may remain hidden from drinking water operators even during accidents and releases into waterways such as the chemical fire at the Eisenbarth well pad.

Because of this trade secret loophole, even in the event of an emergency situation, first responders and public waterworks do not have access to the full list of chemicals from industry or the Ohio Department of Natural Resources- including chemicals protected under trade secret law.

We ask today that our lawmakers close this chemical reporting loophole which threatens public health and our key mission to provide our customers high quality potable water. Quickly providing the full list of chemicals and quantities spilled, including trade secret chemicals, during oil and gas emergencies is common sense legislation.

Please protect our sources of drinking water in Ohio and the health of millions of people who rely on those sources. Support our drinking water utilities by giving them the timely information needed to allow them to make the best decisions possible. You can do these things by supporting an amendment in the state budget bill to close this chemical reporting loophole.

Thank you for allowing me to speak to the committee. I'd be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.