



House State and Local Government Committee
Proponent Testimony – HB 340

February 26, 2020

Franklin County Board of Commissioners
John O'Grady, President
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Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity for the Franklin County Board of Commissioners to submit written testimony in support of HB 340.

Franklin County joins our colleagues from across the state in support of HB 340's proposed revisions to those decades-old portions of the Ohio Revised Code which govern the way we review plans for the maintenance and improvement of drainage infrastructure. In urban counties just as in rural counties, the question of how effectively we manage our water and drainage systems is crucial to our collective resiliency, specifically as it relates to the protection of homes, businesses, roads, and agricultural resources.

As you have heard, HB 340 reflects the input and recommendations of the Drainage Law Revision Task Force, comprised of county commissioners, county engineers, soil and water conservation experts, OSU Extension staff and others, who spent the last several years reviewing each part of existing statute and identifying areas needing improvement, modernization and clarity. We appreciate the work of these experts and Representative Cupp's leadership in developing this legislation which would clarify and modernize drainage statutes to allow us to be more efficient and effective in reviewing proposed drainage improvement projects.

We specifically support the bill allowing the use of modern technology to review existing drainage infrastructure, clearly understand the presenting issue, and illustrate how a proposed maintenance or improvement project would solve the issue. Currently, county commissioners must physically inspect proposed projects in-person, and without a trained eye, you can imagine these "viewings" often fail to provide a clear illustration and understanding of both the problem (often partly underground) and the proposed solution. By allowing county commissioners the ability to leverage video and drone technology, for example, trained engineers and experts can construct more illustrative views of both the problem and solution for us to consider throughout our review process.

We also support the bill's clarification of roles in cases where a petition drainage project crosses county lines. Not long ago, our Board worked with two other counties to review a multi-jurisdictional project, and we encountered parts of existing statute that are unclear as to which of the three counties bore some of the administrative responsibility related to the project review. HB 340 provides needed clarity in this area and will streamline these types of projects going forward.

Thank you again to the bill sponsor and this committee for considering this legislation, and we respectfully ask for your support.