

May 4, 2021

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chairman Creech, Ranking Member Brent and Members of the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee, I wish to thank you for allowing Consumer Energy Alliance (CEA) the opportunity to offer written proponent testimony regarding House Bill 175. My name is Chris Ventura, and I am the Executive Director of Consumer Energy Alliance-Midwest.

On behalf of CEA and our more than 90,000 individual members in the Great Lakes Region, I wish to share our support of House Bill 175 that has been introduced by Rep. Hillyer. We believe this legislation will aid in offering balanced environmental stewardship with regulatory certainty for long-term economic growth in our state.

Founded in 2006, CEA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing virtually every sector of the U.S. economy – from the iron and steel industry to truckers, airlines, agriculture, labor unions, restaurants, chemical manufacturers, small businesses, and families. Our members support a rational, all-of-the-above energy policy that utilizes all of our domestic natural resources – both traditional and renewable – while ensuring continued progress in protecting our shared environment.

Sustainable economic growth relies on both regulatory certainty and balanced regulations which allow for the construction, maintenance, and modernization of critical energy infrastructure across our state. The importance of this was recognized just two years ago when the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corp of Engineers finalized a rule that provided more clarity from the federal government to provide commonsense interpretations of regulating what are truly navigable waterways and restore our system of cooperative federalism.

Responsible regulatory policies should always consider the needs of consumers while leveraging and supporting the development of state-of-the-art technologies to improve our environmental stewardship.

The specter of revisiting the sweeping regulatory scope of the Waters of the U.S. Rule at the state level certainly is cause for concern due to the numerous unforeseen implications it would have for a host of industry sectors, farmers, rural communities, families, and energy consumers. This important legislation would prevent the diminishment of private property rights and increased regulatory burdens that would hamper the evolution of our state's energy delivery systems. The growing diversification of our power generating fleet, including installations of utility-scale renewable energy projects, that require transmission planning may face increased regulatory costs and time lines with increased regulatory uncertainty.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to comment on HB 175. In the event the committee may have any questions, please feel free to contact me at cventura@consumerenergyalliance.org.