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Sent: Monday, May 17, 2021 5:43 PM
To: Ryser, Megan <Megan.Ryser@ohiohouse.gov>; 'brewohio@gmail.com' <brewohio@gmail.com>
Subject: Testimony in Opposition to HB 175

Dear Agriculture and Conservation Committee:

It is hard for me to believe that you are considering a bill that would end Clean Water Act protections for Ohio's "ephemeral" streams (waters that only flow when it rains). Headwater streams are vital habitats. They are the cleanest purist aquatic habitats and support a variety of sensitive aquatic organisms like the Eastern Hellbender which is currently on the State of Ohio's Endangered Species List.

I have worked in the field of Water Quality Monitoring, Research and education for almost 40 years. I have spent most of that time trying to protect and preserve water quality. Since the late 18th century, 90% of Ohio's wetland resources have been destroyed or degraded through draining, filling or other modifications (Source Ohio EPA (https://epa.ohio.gov/portals/47/facts/ohio_wetlands.pdf)). Since I was born I have watched the state of Ohio fill in over 60% of the states wetlands and cover a significant portion of the state with impervious surfaces (forests, prairies, and wetlands) that have caused a myriad of problems including erosion, flooding, habitat loss and the extinction of many aquatic species. Some wetlands are ephemeral and will be impacted by this legislation. The changes in land uses that replaced the pervious surfaces brought with it a variety of issues including pollution that has made many streams that once were fishable and swimmable inhabitable.

We spend millions of dollars each year on restoration projects in the state of Ohio to fix the problems caused by the shortsighted economic development goals that benefit a few at the expense of Ohio Tax Payers. Take flooding and storm water management for example, Our Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Storm Water Management Districts are either using tax payer dollars to install green infrastructure on public property or teaching residents how to use their own money to install Green Infrastructure to try to mitigate the many problems created by impervious surfaces. If you pass this bill are adding headwater streams and ephemeral wetlands to the list of waterways converted to impervious land surfaces..

Unlike projects in the lower portion of a watershed, filling in the headwaters will resulting in pollution to the entire watershed - undoing the progress we have made over the years trying to restore water quality our waterways in order to make them fishable and swimmable again. It is impossible to know what damage this will cause. And for what - a few more bushels of corn? My undergraduate degree is in agriculture. Using headwater streams for farm production will compact the land and make it impervious.

When we add impervious surfaces we export water out of our area and aquifers are not replenished. According to the Ohio Groundwater Quality Report over 42% of Ohioans

rely on groundwater for their drinking water
(source: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/1987/0745/report.pdf>. As Climate change alters our nations weather patterns we may have less rainfall to replenish our aquifers as it is. Shouldn't we consider the impacts of making even more of our land impervious and the impacts this might have on the states groundwater resources? My grandfather introduced me to this old adage: 'We will not know the worth of water till the well is dry.' Clean abundant freshwater resources are 'liquid gold' and are critical to a healthy economy.

I think we owe it to ourselves and the young people who will follow us to reject this bill and to concentrate on protecting the states fresh water resources and achieving the Clean Water Acts ultimate goal of swimmable and fishable waters. I strongly urge you to vote against HB 175.

Sincerely,

Anne Lyon

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