



Opponent Testimony of Aubrey Helmuth Miller
House Bill 175
Presented to the Ohio Agricultural and Conservation Committee
May 19, 2021

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Creech, Ranking Member Brent and Members of the Ohio House Agriculture and Conservation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today on House Bill 175 (HB 175). My name is Aubrey Helmuth Miller, Founder and CEO with Redbudsuds.

As a small business owner, a mom, and an avid outdoor enthusiast, I wear a lot of hats.

No matter which role I'm playing, clean water is critical.

As a manufacturer of natural soap and shampoo, my company relies on high quality clean water for making our products.

As a brand, we serve a niche audience of outdoor adventure enthusiasts and folks interested in natural health.

My customers are primarily Ohioans, though we sell online and wholesale nationwide - bringing out-of-state dollars into Ohio. I am in the business of making soap, *and* I make connections for people between the beauty of nature where they love to recreate, and the products they use everyday.

The quality of our water here in Ohio -- and building trust that our rivers, lakes and streams are *actually* clean and safe to recreate in -- builds my customer base.

The latest census showed that people are leaving the region, but we know they will come back over the next 20 years as the Great Lakes basin becomes even more highly sought after for ... guess what... it's fresh water.

It is common sense that we would want to do everything we can to protect this most basic human need - access to clean water. Ephemeral streams are critical because water knows no boundaries. It's common sense that all water is connected.

Three quick anecdotes from my experience adventuring my husband and toddler in Stark County:



- We see a LOT of flooding on the Tuscarawas river, closest to our home. It's been channelized and so 90% of the time we go to take a hike or a picnic near its shores, it's brown. Mucky. Yucky.
- Further upstream, the closest place for us to explore near water is Stadium Park, just by the Football Hall of Fame. The West Branch of the Nimisila flows right through it. It's pretty. But during high water, you get this sewer smell. Also yuck.
- In contrast, there's a wetland that was recently restored down by Sippo Lake. Water was redirected back into this wetland after years of running off pavements, ditches, etc. The restored area is gorgeous, wildlife everywhere, it's been a favorite spot to visit during the shutdown - a place I've been restored to health time and time again through meet-ups with friends, grandparents, and just the three of us on a Sunday morning before church.

It is common sense, business sense, and ethical that we would do everything we can to protect our wetlands and ephemeral streams.

We need more, not less, help restoring Ohio's landscape to health.

In conclusion, Chairman and Members of the committee, thank you for considering our perspective and our recommendations. I would be happy to answer any questions if you have them.

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