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Opponent Testimony of Brewster Rhoads
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 Brewster Rhoads, Co-Chair, Ohio River Recreation Trail.

I am strongly opposed to House Bill 175. Why on earth would the Ohio Legislature want to make it more possible for pollution to seep into our drinking water by eliminating ephemeral streams from protections provided by the Clean Water Act? All rainwater eventually ends up in our groundwater or flows downstream. In Cincinnati we get our drinking water from the Ohio River which receives runoff from nearly half of the state of Ohio. Communities to the north of Cincinnati get their drinking water from the Great Miami aquifer which gets its water primarily from ground water throughout the Great Miami watershed.

Lifting regulations designed to protect ephemeral streams and bodies of water from contamination will only contribute to the pollution of Ohio's drinking water and force our public water utilities to spend more money to clean it.

The Ohio River Recreation Trail (www.OhioRiverRecreationTrail.org) is working with river communities from Portsmouth to Cincinnati (and down the Ohio to Louisville) to create a destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts interested in paddling, boating, cycling and fishing along the Ohio River. Any effort by the Ohio Legislature to weaken regulations designed to protect our groundwater or waterways from pollution will eventually threaten the water quality in the Ohio – and the public perception that the Ohio River is not safe as a source of drinking water or as a venue for recreation.

I urge you not to make it more possible for developers, manufacturers, oil and gas companies or anyone else to pollute our waterways, including streams and ponds that exist only when it rains. Every drop of rain goes somewhere... and ends up in our drinking water eventually.

Thank you Chairman and Members of the committee for considering my perspective on this important issue.

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