

**Ohio House Agriculture and Conservation Committee**

**Opponent Testimony—House Bill 175**

**Wendy Dyer, May 19, 2021**

I am writing to ask the committee to vote no on House Bill 175.

I was born and grew up in Huron, a small Ohio town. Most people have never been there or have even heard of it. However, it is easy to find on a map. Look for Lake Erie (the big blue part on the top of the map) and follow the shoreline to the southern-most point—that's Huron. I have been gone for more than 35 years, but that is still the place I call home.

Huron was a nice place grow-up for many reasons: the people looked out for each other, it had good schools, etc. But what made it special, what made it great, was the Lake. The summers of my childhood were spent on the beach—digging in the sand, swimming in the water, and looking for Lucky Stones—with my mom and my sisters. In my teens my dad was a charter boat captain, so catch limits, Erie Dearies, and Ugly Sticks were frequent subjects of discussion. He never made enough to quit his day job, but he it brought him joy.

Yes, my memories are probably happier than the reality—there were biting flies, dead fish, and algae.

However, I can say without a doubt that Lake Erie is Ohio's greatest and most important resource. It and the rivers that feed it provide drinking water for millions of Ohioans. It is the home to more than 1500 animal and plant species. It is vital to multiple industries—including tourism. Thus, it is in our best interest and our responsibility to protect it.

You can find Huron on a map another way. It is on the eastern edge of what is known as the Western Basin. This is the area in Northwestern Ohio that drains to Lake Erie. It has always been farmland, due to its rich, fertile soil. Unfortunately, this area has been in the news too often the last decade because the runoff from the farms ends up in the Lake and causes toxic algae blooms. Further, this is not just a Western Basin or a Lake Erie problem. These types of algae blooms can happen in Ohio's other sources of water.

Two years ago, Ohio invested \$172 million in the H2Ohio program to clean up and protect Lake Erie and Ohio's rivers and streams. It does not make sense to reverse course now—Vote no on HB 175.