

May 24, 2020

Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Agriculture and Conservation Committee,

On behalf of our Board of Supervisors we write regarding our concerns with HB 175 currently under consideration by the Agriculture and Conservation Committee. This bill excludes vital ephemeral streams from water pollution control programs with Ohio EPA and will degrade conservation efforts and natural resources in Franklin County, and beyond.

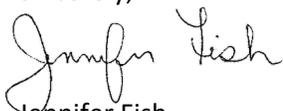
Ephemeral streams are our first line of defense from water pollution, stream bank erosion and flooding, and the Ohio EPA estimates there are more than 36,000 miles of ephemeral streams in Ohio. An important part of our network of headwater streams, ephemeral streams naturally manage and treat water before reaching our major water bodies - the Ohio River and Lake Erie. As rainwater falls, water collects in ephemeral streams, where it soaks into the dry stream bed and filters through vegetation within the channel. This vital natural process reduces the amount and velocity of the water that flows downstream and helps filter out pollutants as well.

To ensure the protection of this green infrastructure and the ecosystem services it provides, effective, targeted regulation is imperative. If regulation is eliminated, development and other land uses may result in these streams being lost and eliminated by being filled in, and without any requirements to mitigate these impacts. If this oversight is eliminated, the ability of Franklin Soil and Water to work with developers will be hindered. Our ability to work collaboratively to develop solutions that ensure natural systems and functions are properly replaced and continue to provide stormwater treatment will be greatly reduced. Removing ephemeral streams from protection may provide cost savings to business in Ohio in the short-term, but long-term, businesses, government, and residents will pay the price of increased water pollution, nutrient runoff, algae blooms and flooding, as well as ongoing impacts to fish and other wildlife.

The ability for the Ohio EPA to provide proper oversight over all our stream resources is critical if our communities are going to be sustainable in the future. With increasing pressures from climate change and growing human populations, we are going to see increasing threats and compounding impacts to our natural resources, including flooding and toxic algae blooms, if we do not protect our resources wisely. Our natural resources and the ecological services they provide are as complex as our economic system. Everything is interdependent and our community sustainability is linked to carefully balancing the needs of both.

For additional information or guidance, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jennifer Fish, Director, Kyle Wilson, Assistant Director at [kwilson@franklinswcd](mailto:kwilson@franklinswcd), or call 614-486-9613.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Fish  
Director

