

From Peggy Schluchter (citizen of Ohio) June 22, 2021
Granville, Ohio Resident

I am opposed to House Bill 175 that has been reviewed by the Agriculture and Conservation Committee. I have read the article by George Elmaraghy in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and I am convinced that this bill, if allowed to pass, will cause our waterways in the State of Ohio to become more polluted.

Mr. Elmaraghy is a federal commissioner for the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission and a member of the International Joint Commission Water Quality Board. He held a previous position as chief of the surface water division of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Per Mr. Elmaraghy, if HB 175 is enacted, discharging pollutants to or filling these features would not be regulated, and anyone could fill, dredge or discharge any pollutants to these bodies of water without a permit. Per the Ohio EPA, ephemeral streams represent more than 30% of Ohio's primary headwater streams, that is, the small creeks, brooks, springs and ravines that are the origin of most rivers.

Furthermore, Ephemeral streams and wetlands play a major role in managing floodwaters, filtering contaminants, recharging groundwater and providing habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. Destroying them will result in degrading other larger water bodies that are the source of drinking water in Ohio and used for fishing and recreation.

Enacting HB 175 in Ohio would result in reversing the progress we have made in the last 50 years to clean Ohio's streams and lakes, to make them safe to be used for drinking water, fishing and swimming.

We have a small creek on our property that children play in and we drink the water from our well. How can any landowner be assured that their water will be safe to drink and play in if HB175 is approved?

The United States is currently experiencing water shortages due to rising climate temperatures. We must protect the water we have in the State of Ohio from further contamination. We must keep the current environmental protection laws in place with regards to ephemeral waters. We already have issues as it is with algae bloom in Lake Erie as a result of chemicals leaching into the lake.

I just retired in April and was a Production Engineering Manager at a major defense contractor in Ohio. I was highly involved in the last 6 years of bringing work to Ohio. I worked long hours. I came home at night and was exhausted. It was hard to put a good meal on the table and it was easy to sit in front the the TV and try and destress. I speak for the Ohio Citizens who are too tired, overworked and stressed out to follow these issues. Whether they are republicans, democrats, or any other party, I think the citizens of Ohio would want to keep the waters clean for themselves, their children and their grandkids. I think the people who want to pass this bill are counting on the citizens to be too tired and over worked to pay attention to this bill and its impact. I trust the opponents of this bill including the Nature Conservancy of Ohio, Ohio Scenic River Association, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, Rivers Unlimited 501 (c),3, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, Ducks Unlimited, Lake Erie Waterkeeper, Ohio Scenic Rivers Association, Central Ohio Watershed Council, Redbudssuds, Alliance for the Great Lakes, Greater Dayton Partners for the Environment, National Wildlife Federation, Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District, Ohio Conservation Federation, Mill Creek Alliance, Ohio EPA, Ohio Wetlands Association, Midwest Biodiversity Institute, Ohio River Foundation, Sierra Club of Ohio, Xavier University, Darby Creek Association, Franklin Soil and

Water District, Association of Ohio Metropolitan Wastewater Agencies, Mud Run Conservancy, Environmental Law and Policy Center and all the individuals who have testified and opposed this bill to date. I trust that these organizations are trying to protect the people of Ohio that are too tired and overworked to pay attention to the issues.

I urge you to stop this bill and if it can't be stopped, to vote "No" for House Bill 175 for all the tired hard working people of Ohio, their children and grandchildren.

Thank-You,

Peggy Schluchter