

Opponent Testimony of Bill Schieman to House Bill 175.

Presented to the Ohio Agricultural and Conservation Committee September 28, 2021.

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Creech, Ranking Member Brent and Members of the Ohio House Agriculture and Conservation Committee:

My name is William D. (Bill) Schieman and I give this testimony **in opposition to HB 175**. Although I serve on the Boards of several non-profit organizations, the testimony I give now is my personal testimony and not given on behalf of any organization of which I'm a member or otherwise affiliated.

I have carefully read all the amendments to HB 175 since last giving in-person opposition testimony on May 25, 2021 and the amendments are vastly inadequate.

HB 175 is unnecessary and will cause long-term detrimental damage to the environment and it weakens protections for drinking water sources across all Ohio at a time when more protection and increased enforcement is needed more than ever.

During the past 2 years, the OEPA has already revised ephemeral stream mitigation requirements and lowered fees to the extent it can no longer sensibly be argued that further deregulation is necessary. The argument that ephemeral stream law adds tens of thousands of dollars in development costs passed on to consumers is an exaggerated fabrication.

Removing protection for ephemeral streams will allow the discharge of sewage, coal mining wastes and an untold number of chemical toxins into our rivers and groundwater.

Ephemeral streams are key components of all watersheds. Even when no water flows in them, their vegetative buffers continue to trap and filter pollutants that would otherwise wash further downstream every time it rains.

OEPA estimates there are over 36,000 miles of ephemeral streams in Ohio. Their benefits and functions include:

- Prevents flash floods by increasing storage capacity and drainage of water during rain events.
- Captures and filters contaminants.
- Provides critical habitat for migratory birds, native amphibians, small aquatic animals and other wildlife.
- Recharges groundwater.
- Lowers water temperatures downstream which helps inhibit harmful algal blooms.

HB 175 is bad legislation that will enrich a few at the cost of long-term environmental damage, destruction of fragile ecosystems and an overall lowering of the quality-of-life Ohioan's value most.

Protect our fragile ephemeral streams and recognize the value of the services they provide every day, absolutely free to all Ohioans. Please vote "no" on HB 175. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,



William D. Schieman