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Committees:
Local Government & Elections (Vice-Chair)
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Primary & Secondary Education
Transportation

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Sponsor Testimony – Senate Bill 143
Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
Senator Sandra O'Brien
May 18, 2021

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to deliver sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 143. This legislation would require the director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to adopt a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for aluminum in drinking water of 0.2 mg/L. Currently, the federal EPA recommends an MCL of 0.2 mg/L as a National Secondary Drinking Water Regulation¹. However, because this is a secondary standard, it is a non-enforceable guideline. SB 143 would adopt this metric as an enforceable standard in our state.

The origins for this bill lie with a constituent of ours who works in the field of home hemodialysis care. He informed us that one of the machines that his patients use to perform home hemodialysis for life sustaining treatment needs aluminum levels to be below 0.2 mg/L, as required by the Federal Drug Administration. Otherwise, it cannot be used. He added that he and his colleagues sometimes instruct some of their patients not to drink from the local water supply provided by the Warren/Cortland water facility (with aluminum levels ranging from 0.227 mg/L to 0.337 mg/L) if they have elevated serum aluminum levels in their bodies, because high serum aluminum levels in the blood can lead to terrible diseases such as dementia, Alzheimer's, bone disorders, and cancers. Excessive aluminum levels in the body are also known to pose other serious health hazards such as toxic effects to kidneys and blood² as well as increased damage to DNA³.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/secondary-drinking-water-standards-guidance-nuisance-chemicals>

² [Yokel and Golub, 1997](#)

³ [Celik et al., 2012](#)

Our constituent shared with us his findings regarding the aluminum water levels for other facilities around Northeast Ohio. According to this data, the following plants all maintain aluminum levels below 0.2 mg/L in their drinking water:

- Ashtabula
- Austintown
- Boardman
- Cleveland
- Cornersburg
- Mentor
- North Lima
- South Summit
- Tuscarawas County
- Wooster
- Youngstown

As shown, limiting aluminum levels in drinking water below 0.2mg/L is not only possible, but widespread. Drinking water should not be such a hassle for our constituents to the point where hemodialysis patients cannot trust local water supply. Providing safe and clean water is one of the most essential functions of local governments. We owe it to our constituents to ensure that this most basic necessity is not detrimental to their health and to future generations.

Thank you again Mr. Chair for allowing me to speak on Senate Bill 143 today. I am happy to take any questions from the Committee.