

Chairman Schaffer, members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

As a life-long conservationist I have been involved for many years in helping to protect Ohio's great outdoor heritage and our wonderful natural resources that make Ohio a great place to work and live. We are truly blessed to have abundant water resources in this state that are the envy of others across the country. Those precious water resources, and the excellent water quality of those resources, need to be protected so that all can enjoy and use them for sustaining life, protecting the biological diversity of our rivers and lakes, and for recreation that is so important to our quality of life.

In recent years I have become very involved and active in helping Ohio's Scenic Rivers Program, which is considered by many to be one of the best programs in the country. I am now President of the Ohio Scenic Rivers Association, a citizen's group that was formed in 2019 to help protect our scenic rivers in Ohio. There are 15 designated Scenic Rivers in Ohio, including four in Ashtabula County in NE Ohio and the Wild and Scenic Little Beaver Creek in Columbiana County where I live.

I am very much opposed to HB 175 in its current form because water quality in our scenic rivers, and all rivers and streams in the state, starts in the headwaters of the streams, and ephemeral streams are the very start of the headwaters of all streams. This bill will affect water quality in our scenic rivers and all other rivers and streams.

I am also very much opposed to the use of the term "ephemeral features" in this bill. Ephemeral streams are just that, streams! Use of the term "feature" makes it sound like a man-made structure.

If the amendment that is supposed to be added to HB 175 today still uses the term ephemeral features and states that "waters of the state" does not include ephemeral streams then I am still very much opposed to HB 175.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Tom Butch  
President, Ohio Scenic Rivers Association