

To: Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

From: Matt Misicka, Executive Director
Ohio Conservation Federation



Date: 29 March, 2022

Re: Am. H.B. No. 175 Interested Party; Deregulation of Certain Ephemeral Water Features

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fodor, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Conservation Federation, I am writing today to voice our continued concerns regarding the deregulation of ephemeral streams.

Ephemeral streams are the birthplace of Ohio's water-based outdoor recreation economy. According to Southwick Associates, fishing alone contributes \$3B in economic output annually and supports more than 26,000 jobs. Even in a pandemic, Ohio's sportsmen and women fished in record numbers. In 2020, 870,000 fishing licenses were sold (an 8% increase over 2019). When poor water quality impacts fishing, boating, tourism or water treatment, damages can quickly rise into the tens of millions of dollars of lost economic output in a very short amount of time and degraded or polluted waters can diminish nearby home values from five to ten percent.

Scientists and citizens alike recognize the ecological services provided by ephemeral streams and features. Ephemeral streams and features slow, store, and buffer run-off and flood waters by reducing sedimentation, downstream erosion, and nutrient loads that contribute to Harmful Algal Blooms.

As the steward of Ohio's waters, the State is entrusted with ensuring that our water supply is safe and healthy for all Ohioans. At a time when, with the help of robust funding from the Legislature, the H2Ohio program is helping reduce water pollution in the state, ephemeral features must be afforded appropriate protections. While Am. HB175 is an improvement over the earlier version, the Ohio Conservation Federation remains concerned about Ohio's water quality and we urge all Members to carefully consider the impacts of deregulation of ephemeral streams and features on the future of Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew A. Misicka

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