

April 25, 2017

Ohio House Proponent Testimony – HB 121

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Bishoff, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on HB 121. I am John Serrano, Director of Government Affairs for the Vinyl Institute.

The Vinyl Institute is a U.S. trade organization representing the leading manufacturers of vinyl and vinyl additives across North America. Our industry provides an economic value of over \$54 billion and employs over 350,000 people at nearly 3,000 manufacturing facilities across the country.

In Ohio, our industry provides about 27,000 well-paying jobs at nearly 250 facilities across the state. Our industry provides an economic value to the state of around \$4.3 billion.

With such a strong industry in Ohio, it is abhorrent that many of our manufacturers aren't even allowed to adequately compete in the state. HB 121 is designed to address that.

Ohio, like many states in the Midwest and across the nation, is facing a growing problem related to the state's water infrastructure. Our water infrastructure is corroding, adding particulates and contaminants to our drinking water and leading to pipe breaks, water loss and higher costs for municipalities and rate payers. In fact, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) estimates that investments of more than \$26 billion are needed to fix Ohio's drinking and wastewater infrastructure over the next 20 years.

There is a lack of choice and limit on competition that has created local monopolies in pipe markets and increased the costs of funding new and replacement projects at a time when budgets are already tight. There is no reason our cities and water engineers should be prohibited from choosing the most appropriate pipe material for their project. There is no reason local monopolies should be allowed to dictate what's best for the people of Ohio.

HB 121 was written to prevent these local monopolies and to allow all piping materials to compete in the bidding process. If enacted, this legislation would protect the decision making power of local engineers while working to reduce the costs of water infrastructure projects on municipalities and rate payers.

We ask that you allow this bill to pass and provide a level playing field for our industry to compete in these publicly funded projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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