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**Jon Cross**  
State Representative

## House Bill 385 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Koehler, Vice-Chair Creech, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the Ohio House Agriculture and Conservation Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony for House Bill 385, prohibiting cities from dumping into Lake Erie's wester basin.

This bill is in response to a news break stating the City of Maumee reported they have been dumping as much as 150 million gallons of raw sewage EACH YEAR for the past 20 years into the Maumee River. The cities of Port Clinton, Sandusky, and Toledo have also broken their contracts and dumped millions of gallons of sewage into the watershed within the last 20 years as well.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency allows states like Ohio to create permits (NPDES – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) with municipalities to dump a certain amount of raw sewage into the Lake Erie watershed. If they break these contracts, they are fined a certain amount that is determined by the Ohio EPA. In this most recent event, Maumee was fined a measly \$29,936 by the Ohio EPA.

The bill as it is currently written would provoke the Ohio EPA director to remove any NPDES or other permits issued to any municipal corporation located within the wester basin. I understand that this may not be feasible for municipalities and I am happy to work with the committee to find a workable version of this bill.

Regarding penalty increases, cities would face a fine of \$250,000 for a first offense of knowingly violating this new law, with a \$1,000 per day fine of ongoing dumping. An additional \$1 million would be added to the fine if the discharge exceeds 100 million gallons within a 12-month period.

I believe the concept of this bill is important to hold municipalities accountable if they mismanage their water treatment and sewage system.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for allowing me to testify on this bill today. We cannot allow cities to continue harming our beautiful natural resources in our great State of Ohio. Again, I am looking forward to working with the committee and hearing any suggestions for the bill. I'd be happy to take any questions.