



Testimony of Cleveland Water Alliance
The Ohio House
Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources
March 21, 2023

Chairman Jones, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the Agriculture, Development and Natural Resource Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of Cleveland Water Alliance.

My name is Bryan Stubbs, and I am the executive director and president of Cleveland Water Alliance. During my time leading CWA, we've worked to elevate the value of clean water in the Great Lakes region and drive the water economy's potential here in Ohio.

For anyone who might be unfamiliar with Cleveland Water Alliance and what we do, I'll give a brief overview. At CWA, we often reference the water economy. This idea is based on the foundational concept that freshwater - a precious and limited resource - has significant economic value. Any business that utilizes water, utility that treats water, or organization that researches, streamlines, and innovates solutions to monitor and conserve water is a part of the global and interconnected water economy. From next generation water filtration membranes to IoT based water-quality sensors; from satellites monitoring nutrients in our Great Lakes to a ship on the open waters of Lake: each of these are unique examples of technologies and industries that are a part of the water economy.

That's why, as a non-profit economic development organization, we bring together research, industry, and utility partners to enhance the Great Lakes region's water economy, which includes all of Ohio's watersheds as well as the Ohio River. This work is critical – not only because we are living in an increasingly water-stressed world, but also because this work creates jobs and grows industries that protect and manage our most precious freshwater resources across the country.

On behalf of our partners, I would like to say thank you to Governor DeWine, his administration, and the legislature for the continued attention and support to these issues.

Prior state funding has been incredibly impactful for our work. Thanks to this funding from last biennium, the Lake Erie Watershed is now the largest digitally connected freshwater body in the world. That means companies from all over the world can look to Ohio to demonstrate, validate, and even pilot their freshwater solutions and technologies via a world-class water accelerator testbed comprised of hundreds of sensors and buoys, as well as a telecommunications network projected to cover 12,000 square miles of Lake Erie by end of



2023. Our plans include expanding these digital assets into the Ohio River valley over the next two years.

We are seeking further investment in our testbeds with this budget, which will help ensure we sustain the momentum we've generated. In addition to the connectivity we've built over Lake Erie, our other testbed includes a 'pipe farm' in Parma, Ohio where innovators are trialing technologies to identify lead service lines without breaking ground. This innovation is critical to saving time, money, and efforts not only throughout the State, but around the nation as municipalities and utilities work to follow the federal Lead Service Line replacement mandates to ensure that everyone has access to clean, safe drinking water.

Our next phases in our testbed expansion includes establishing an industrial testbed that aims to monitor the resource use of water-intensive companies, both incoming and outgoing water. This will allow us to trial exciting industrial technology, as well as ensuring our freshwater resources are monitored as we attract companies to our region relocating from water-scarce environments.

The momentum at this moment in time is one of urgency as we have a real chance to establish Ohio as the freshwater capital of the world. Our reputation as a valuable destination for innovative water technology is growing. We see this in the increasing deal flow of opportunities we oversee. Over the last two years we've watched Lake Erie and the Great Lakes region become a globally-recognized place to do business within the water economy. We've been invited to attend and speak at more than 30 conferences in 2022, including events in Germany, France, Spain, Canada, the Netherlands, and South Korea.

Your investment in this budget also represents a significant investment in job creation. Our testbed assets have generated interest from more than 150 companies from around the world with interest in piloting technologies, connecting with manufacturers, or establishing new US-based offices. We've deployed nearly 50 technologies from over a dozen countries thus far and have a waitlist of more than 30 companies for the 2023 season. CWA has also secured a technology pilot from an overseas partner, that would significantly mitigate supply-chain issues for utilities. Research projects that the global "smart water management" market will exceed \$23 billion by 2027, and water economy within Greater Cleveland alone creates more than 300 net new jobs annually. We are requesting \$3m each fiscal year for the Cleveland Water Alliance Sustainable Water Technologies Initiative.

Thank you for your time today and for your consideration of further funding the water economy. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.