



**County  
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Association of Ohio**

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**To: Members of the Ohio House Agriculture & Rural Development Committee**  
**From: Brian Mead, Policy Analyst**  
**RE: Interested Parties Testimony for Senate Bill 1**

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Chairman Hill, Vice Chairman Burkley, Ranking Member Patterson, and members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee thank you for the opportunity to give interested parties testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 1. My name is Brian Mead and I am a Policy Analyst for the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO). I cover agricultural and environmental issues for CCAO.

Substitute Senate Bill 1 is a bill which will help improve the water quality in Ohio. A little over six months ago the Toledo Water Crisis happened. Since that time leaders of the both chambers and the administration have worked diligently to make water quality in Ohio better. I want to commend Representatives Jim Buchy and Dave Hall for their efforts to be inclusive of many interested parties in crafting this measure. The same can be said for Senators Bob Peterson and Randy Gardner for their leadership on this bill. I also want to thank this committee and Chairman Hill for holding hearings in Northwest Ohio to hear from those who are most impacted. Hearings were held in both Van Wert and Lucas Counties.

Within the last six months CCAO has created a Water Quality Taskforce to study this critical issue. It is Co-chaired by Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken and Auglaize County Commissioner Doug Spencer. We have brought together both rural and urban commissioners on this taskforce. The group has met with industry and regulatory leaders, and early this month, Senator Gardner and Representative Michael Sheehy were part of a panel discussing Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 61.

Reducing Harmful Algal Blooms and protecting Lake Erie should always be a priority of the state. Having a robust Agriculture Industry also should be a priority. While agriculture is a piece of the problem, it is also a piece of the solution. The agriculture community has taken many strides to start fixing this complex issue. There are other point and non-point sources that are also affecting water quality like failing home septic systems, overflows from public water treatment plants, and others that will also need to play a role in reducing the nutrients entering Ohio's water sheds. CCAO looks forward to continued discussion on this critical issue.

Chairman Hill and members of the Committee, thank you again for giving me opportunity to give interested parties testimony.



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