



April 7, 2022

The Honorable Richard Michael DeWine
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 34215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of our members, supporters, and those we serve, we want to **first thank you and your administration for being a champion for clean water investments across the state.** In particular, we thank you for leading on the implementation of the H2Ohio program, which is a well-rounded and science-based program that is making strides to improve Ohio's waterways. We also **urge you to veto House Bill 175 that is now in your hands.**

As you know, Ohio is fortunate to have incredible natural resources, from our Great Lake, to the Ohio River, and numerous lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams in between. These resources are the source of drinking water for millions of Ohioans, and they are economic engines for our state. The tourism industry generates over \$40 billion in Ohio, with a large portion of that being generated in and around our waterways, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs.

To fully protect these incredible aquatic resources and the tremendous economic benefits they provide, **our organizations again strongly urge you to veto House Bill 175.** While some of the Senate amendments improved the House Passed version of this bill, the core elements regarding Ohio Revised Code 6111 and the removal of ephemeral streams—from Waters of the State and the regulatory protections that comes with that designation—is bad for Ohioans and our waterways.

The bill directly undercuts taxpayer investments via the H2Ohio program by eroding the foundational water quality regulations currently preventing pollution across the state. Ohio has an estimated 36,000 miles of ephemeral, rain dependent streams, opening them up to pollution and degradation. HB 175 opens the door to future pollution and degradation that will inevitably flow downstream to larger waterways, many of which communities across the state rely on for their drinking water. Through this bill, the Legislature has purposely ignored the science in favor of an interpretation that benefits those that pollute and degrade waterways across Ohio. In addition, this bill will trigger several regulatory changes that will cause industry and regulatory confusion, not the clarity proponents claim.

Lastly, this legislation is not needed. The Biden Administration has already begun working on changes to the Waters of the United States definition, which will supersede the changes proposed in this legislation. This back and forth will also cause industry and regulatory confusion.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to VETO this bill, Governor DeWine.

Sincerely,

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