

Ohio House of Representatives  
Economic Development and Environment Committee  
77 S. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43215-6111

Chairman Collier and Honorable Committee Members,

I would like to thank you for offering the opportunity to present testimony in support of Representative Oelslager's legislation, HB 235, to require public notification immediately upon releasing a sewage discharge into any of Ohio's waters or lands. My testimony today is given to illustrate the problem, noting recent sewage discharges we're having from the Hamilton Wastewater Treatment Plant here on the Great Miami River, some of which I and my family have witnessed firsthand. The events I depict include discharges of both wastewater from the Mohawk Paper Plant, and discharges of other untreated wastewater. These discharges occurred from a combined sewer overflow pipe, yet did not occur after a rain event, and therefore are evident of egregious and blatant disregards for community health and environmental impact to the river corridor. While the presentation perspective originates from a fisherman's viewpoint, this is a serious matter for overall public health and safety in all of Ohio.

As you will see, I have made numerous contacts with the principal entities involved in the sewage discharges, along with Ohio EPA and Federal EPA, and finally with the Ohio Attorney General's office. To date, none of these persons have provided any substantive answers to the myriad questions I've presented, and no one has been willing to commit any answer in writing. I am hopeful that relaying our experiences on the Great Miami River in Hamilton will help to reinforce the immediate need for this legislation introduced by Representative Oelslager, to ensure health and safety for all Ohio citizens and visitors.

The proposed legislation in HB235 is an excellent first step. Given the gravity of the sewage discharges here in Hamilton, their immediate and long-term effects on the river system and those Ohioans that use it, I believe much more stringent measures are warranted. Public notification is an after-event bandage on a huge festering sore, but will serve as the best first-aid currently available. At the very least it will provide for some public accountability on those municipalities, corporations and agencies that, having been charged with preserving our health and well being, rather have determined to obfuscate their actions. Please consider support for the legislation and allow Ohio's citizens to better choose to use natural waterways in an educated and safe manner.

I truly appreciate your open ear, and thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Malone  
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