

WATER LEAGUE

*The mission of Water League is to engage
the public in the stewardship of water.*

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February 13, 2023

To: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Representative Ken Helm, Chair
Representatives Annessa Hartman and Mark Owens Vice-Chairs

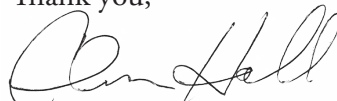
RE: Water League supports HB 2647 that declares harmful algal blooms to be menace to public health and welfare; that directs the OHA to develop response strategy to harmful algal blooms; and that directs the DEQ to identify water sources susceptible to harmful algal blooms, monitor those waters, identify sources of pollutants, develop strategies to reduce pollutants, determine their causes, and prepare a biennial report.

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, and Committee Members,

Water League supports HB 2647 as an ongoing program to protect and restore water quality in streams; however, we do not see how this program can or will be successful without continuously appropriated funds. HB 2647 reads as an unfunded mandate; as such, it may be set up to fail.

Historically, the SWCDs have been the lead organizations to monitor and address water quality coming off farms and assist in agricultural water use conservation. But, the issue of low water quality due to the over-appropriation of surface waters and resultant high water temperatures, and the overuse of fertilizers has not been sufficiently addressed; hence the need for HB 2647 and other state agencies stepping in to help get the job done. The point here is that the NRCS, SWCDs, Watershed Councils, and other NGOs have been at work for decades and the problem of water quality has continued to grow worse. The OHA and DEQ will need continuously appropriated funds if they are to be successful implementing the statutes envisioned in HB 2647.

Thank you,



Christopher Hall
Executive Director