



John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
Craig W. Butler, Director

**House Agriculture & Rural Development Committee
Testimony of Director Craig Butler
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
On HB 61**

February 17, 2015

Good morning Chairman Hill, Vice Chair Burkley, Ranking Minority Member Patterson, and Members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. I am Craig Butler, Director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and I am pleased to provide testimony for House Bill 61, specific to the provisions related to Ohio EPA. As the sponsors stated during their testimony last week, much of this bill contains provisions very important to Governor Kasich and previously included in House Bill 490 from the 130th General Assembly. I would like to echo my fellow Directors' comments that we are also appreciative of the House emphasizing this as a top priority for the state of Ohio.

Lake Erie has clearly been negatively impacted by nutrients from many sources and other threats. Governor Kasich has made water quality and Lake Erie a top priority and there are many important provisions in the upcoming budget that address this issue. I am pleased to offer additional information on the administration's initiatives and those which are contained in House Bill 61.

I will briefly discuss the provisions that are in both the Governor's budget and House Bill 61:

- Phosphorus Monitoring & Optimization Study - This provision will require certain Publicly Owned Wastewater Treatment Works (POTWs) to monitor their discharge for phosphorus and require plants that don't have current phosphorus limits to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of such a limit on their systems. Given the issues with nutrient and phosphorus loading in Ohio's waters, including inland lakes and Lake Erie, it is important to have accurate data on the amount of phosphorus discharged into our waters. This amendment will provide a framework for future targeted efforts and be very valuable when determining how to allocate resources to best address this problem.
- Open Lake Disposal - While dredging our harbors is vital to Ohio's economy, adding more dredged material to Lake Erie doesn't help solve any environmental problems. It is simply not beneficial to place this material back in Lake Erie. We are concerned about the potential impact on water quality of continuing this practice. There are ways to beneficially reuse this material so that it can be a marketable commodity, not a liability.

This amendment will limit the practice of open lake disposal by 2020 and incentivize other options for the dredge materials. There is language that will allow, under certain circumstances, director's discretion regarding open lake disposal if no viable options exist. This will ensure continued open harbors for commerce.

Thank you, Chairman Hill and members of the committee for your time. I am glad to answer any questions you may have on the Governor's budget initiatives related to water quality and those included in House Bill 61.