



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

**Deputy Director for Water Resources and Lake Erie Programs, Karl Gebhardt
Sunset Review Committee Testimony
November 16, 2015**

Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Jordan and members of the Ohio Sunset Review Committee. I am Karl Gebhardt, Deputy Director for Water Resources and Lake Erie Programs at the Ohio EPA and I am here today to encourage the continuation of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

As stated in the application, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission has in the past primarily focused its efforts on the issuance and management of research grants pertaining to various environmental issues of Lake Erie and its tributaries. However, with the recent issues and challenges facing Lake Erie and changes to the Commission staff, we believe now is an opportune time to evaluate, and possibly re-focus the mission of the Lake Erie Commission. We are committed to addressing these issues and challenges in the Lake and the role of the Lake Erie Commission in helping to address them.

With this in mind, the Ohio Revised Code provides the opportunity for the Commission to be more engaged in the broader issues of Lake Erie, such as the nutrients that are impacting water quality as well as the challenge of developing a beneficial use program for dredged material, which as a result of SB 1 in this General Assembly will be prohibited from open-lake disposal in 2020. While it is important that applied research and demonstration projects continue to be conducted on the various questions related to Lake Erie, the need for more action-oriented programs and coordination of state, federal and non-government resources being directed at

Lake Erie is at a critical juncture. The Lake Erie Commission with its combination of agency and public members is well suited to assume this role going forward.

The Commission will be meeting in mid-December to begin a strategic evaluation of how best to be engaged in affecting and directing real action toward the critical issues facing Lake Erie. Ohio is part of several multi-state and US-Canadian efforts to address the water quality of Lake Erie. The Commission can be positioned to play an important role in the coordination and implementation of programs, projects, funding, and research that will help address the challenges facing Lake Erie.

Thank you for this opportunity and I would be happy to answer any questions.