



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

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Sunset Review Committee Testimony on the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission Provided by ODNR Chief of the Division of Soil & Water Resources Michael Bailey December 14, 2015

Good afternoon Chairman Brown and members of the Sunset Review Committee. My name is Mike Bailey and I am the Chief of the Division of Soil and Water Resources within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present testimony on the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission for your consideration.

Purpose of the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission (OSWCC) was created in 1941 with the principal responsibility of ensuring that all Ohio counties are served by effectively administered, adequately supported soil and water conservation districts. Every year at the July meeting, the OSWCC determines the allocation of state matching funds to all county soil and water conservation districts for the fiscal year. Seven field staff within ODNR's Division of Soil and Water Resources visit with each SWCD on an annual basis to verify local revenue dollars upon which state match dollars are based. The field staff also assists the OSWCC by officiating at the 88 SWCD annual supervisor elections.

Composition of the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission

The Commission consists of a total of twelve members: seven voting members and five ex-officio members. Six of the seven voting members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the senate, and the seventh member is designated by resolution of the board of directors of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Of the seven appointed members, four must have a knowledge of or interest in agricultural production and the natural resources of the state. One member shall represent rural interests and one member shall represent urban interests. All voting members serve a term of four years and not more than three members can be from the same political party. The directors of agriculture, environmental protection, and natural resources; the vice-president for agricultural administration of the Ohio State University; and an officer of the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or their designees, serve as ex officio members of the Commission, without the power to vote.

Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission Summary and Recommendation

Effective January 1, 2016 in accordance with Am. Sub. House Bill 64, all programs and staff related to ODNR soil and water conservation will be transferred to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) as the new Division of Soil and Water Conservation. With that transfer, the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission will also fall under the purview of ODA.

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission has been a valuable resource for the state in supporting Ohio's efforts to provide leadership and services that enable Ohioans to conserve, protect, and enhance soil, water, and land resources. ODA supports the continuation of the vital role fulfilled by this Commission and recommends that the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission be retained by the Sunset Review Committee.

Members of the Committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to take any questions that you may have at this time.