



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

**Ohio Water Resources Council**  
**Karl Gebhardt, Ohio EPA Deputy Director for Water Resources**  
**Before the Sunset Review Committee**  
**December 14, 2015**

Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Jordan and members of the Sunset Review Committee; my name is Karl Gebhardt and I am the Deputy Director for Water Resources at Ohio EPA. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Ohio Water Resources Council (OWRC) as well as the State Agency Coordinating Council and the Advisory Group which were created in statute to assist the OWRC in its functions.

Originally formed on a temporary basis as an outgrowth of the 1993 Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Water Resources, the OWRC was established by statute in 2001 to provide a forum for policy development, collaboration and coordination and strategic direction with respect to state water resource programs among state agencies and commissions. At that time, the newly created statute also redefined the roles and responsibilities associated with the council in order to strengthen its leadership and provide for greater representation by stakeholder groups.

The OWRC consists of the ten members: six state agency directors, three members representing the Ohio Public Works Commission, Ohio Water Development Authority, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, and an executive assistant in the Governor's Office. As briefly mentioned above, the statute in which the OWRC resides also establishes a State Agency Coordinating Group and an Advisory Group. The State Agency Coordinating Group includes

program administrators of the member agencies and commissions of the Council and the executive director of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. This is the group that meets regularly to conduct the activities of the Council. The Advisory Group consists of twenty-four members whom are all appointed by the Council and represent organizations and entities with an interest in state water resource programs. The Advisory Group membership increased from twenty to twenty-four members in 2007. Since that increase, it has been exceedingly difficult to get meaningful input from the Advisory Group and there has been difficulty finding appointees willing to fill all the seats of the Advisory Group. In addition to membership, there is an unclear role of the Advisory Group as it is essentially oversees the Council, whose main fundamental purpose is advise state water resource programs on policy development.

It is felt that codification of coordination and collaboration among the respective state agencies and commissions involved in water resource programs is no longer essential to the process. Out of the three groups, the Coordinating Group has been the most successful in achieving the intentions of the Task Force. Given this, we believe a less formalized non-legislative approach for this group will still ensure successful inter-agency coordination while receiving input from all interested stakeholders. It is Ohio EPA's recommendation that Ohio Water Resources Council, State Agency Coordinating Group and Advisory Group all be sunset by the Sunset Review Committee. The request to have the Council and both groups sunsetted has been discussed with all respective agencies and commissions. Thank you for your attention and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.