

February 21, 2017

The Honorable Cliff Rosenberger  
Speaker of the House  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Speaker Rosenberger:

On behalf of the four undersigned groups and the millions of Ohioans we serve, we are writing to express our opposition to any legislation that is similar to HB 214 from last session.

A wide variety of interests are represented on this letter, including engineers, water professionals, local government officials and other groups. While we have very different interests and responsibilities, we all share a commitment to ensure that Ohioans have access to clean, reliable and fiscally responsible water, wastewater and stormwater systems. We all take this responsibility and our public accountability seriously, as our water systems affect public health and public resources.

Currently, our engineers, water professionals and local governments are able to determine how best to serve our local communities' water needs. These are exceedingly complex decisions, as they involve numerous unique local considerations. This system has and continues to serve Ohio well.

Unfortunately, this state has faced efforts in the past three years that would fundamentally alter and undermine the ability of our engineers and other water professionals to do their jobs and best serve the public. The efforts in Ohio are part of a larger national effort that, thankfully, has failed in more than ten states across this country and in the Republican-controlled Congress. It has failed, in large part, because there is simply not a problem to address. Ohio should not be the first state to pass this type of legislation.

We fully expect that proponents of this legislation will seek its reintroduction by a member of your caucus in the new General Assembly. These proponents are well-funded, national special interests that are committed to seeking state legislation that would place new, unnecessary requirements on those who design and administer our water systems – all in an effort to gain market share.

We certainly understand their desire to win new business, but this type of sales activity should occur through normal channels at the local level instead of trying to use state government to pick winners and losers in the marketplace. If this legislation were to pass, it would fundamentally and negatively alter how we design and administer water systems in this state. Among the negative results would be new and unnecessary red tape and litigation, thereby increasing costs and delays.

When the most recent public hearing was held on this legislation in May 2016, more than 30 individuals and organizations testified against this legislation. As you consider legislative priorities for 2017, we hope that you will oppose this type of legislation and efforts to advance it.

Not only would it have a negative impact on water systems throughout Ohio, it would set a dangerous precedent for this type of legislation in Ohio.

We thank you very much for your service and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth Easterday, President  
American Council of Engineering Companies of Ohio

Suzanne Dulaney, Executive Director  
County Commissioners Association of Ohio

Kent M. Scarrett, Executive Director  
Ohio Municipal League

Kevin Strang, Director  
Ohio Rural Water Association

Cc: Shawn Kasych, Ohio House Policy Director