|  |
| --- |
|  |
| **GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.**  17 SOUTH HIGH STREET – SUITE 245  COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413  PHONE: 614-461-9335  FAX: 614-461-9336  **Coalition of Ohio Regional Districts**  Legislative Activities Report  **March 2020** |

The House Energy & Natural Resources Committee accepted a pair of amendments during the latest hearing for SB 2—the Senate’s priority water quality bill. The two amendments accepted by the committee both touch on the issue of public records. SB 2 creates a Statewide Watershed Planning and Management Program and passed the Senate in short order last year. But House lawmakers have proceeded cautiously, saying they wanted to make sure the plan gels with the governor's H2Ohio efforts and the House's own priority water bill (HB 7), which creates the H2Ohio Trust Fund as a long-term funding solution. HB 7 has only received one Senate hearing.

The Ohio EPA released a draft of its 2020 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report and is now accepting public comments. The report is compiled every two years to gauge compliance with the federal Clean Water Act and outline points of concern. The DeWine administration says the report shows that the state is on the right track in dealing with impairments in Lake Erie. "This is a clear sign that our work and long-term investments in Ohio to improve water quality are succeeding," OEPA Director Laurie Stevenson said. According to the report, Ohio will spend two to three years to develop a TMDL for the Western Lake Erie Basin. The goal is to reduce phosphorus by 40 percent by 2025, under a 2016 pact with Ontario and Michigan.

HB 343, sponsored by Representatives Gayle Manning (R-N. Ridgeville) and John Patterson (D-Jefferson), would create the Water and Sewer Emergency Fund and provide grants to local entities for water and sewer system projects. The bill would appropriate $10 million from the General Revenue Fund to the Water and Sewer Emergency Fund. The funds would then be administered by the Public Works Commission as grants to local subdivisions for emergency water and sewer system projects. Rep. Patterson noted in his sponsor testimony that as of July 1, 2019, the entirety of the Ohio Public Works Commission emergency funds had already been allocated. As a result, no new emergency allocations could be made until the next budget cycle, even though the need for such funding has not dissipated, and recent environmental anomalies have only further threatened the safety and functionality of the infrastructure. Under the bill, the director of the PWC determines which projects are necessary for the immediate preservation of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens. Grants would be administered in the same manner as emergency projects funding by the State Capital Improvements Fund.

Two Columbus-area representatives have introduced legislation aimed at clamping down on “forever chemicals” in Ohio’s drinking water. HB 497, sponsored by Reps. Mary Lightbody (D-Westerville) and Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington), would require the state to establish maximum allowable contaminant levels for PFAS chemicals in drinking water. Although the effects are not fully known, PFAS chemicals are thought to negatively affect health through increased cancer risk, reduced fertility and other impacts. In December, the Ohio EPA and Department of Health unveiled a statewide “PFAS Action Plan” calling for testing of close to 1,500 public water systems, including those that serve communities, schools, daycares and mobile home parks—which supply roughly 90 percent of Ohio’s population with drinking water. Building on that effort, HB 497 would require the OEPA director to adopt rules establishing maximum levels for both drinking and surface water. In forming the rules, the OEPA director would be asked to consider limits adopted by other states, studies and scientific evidence, materials produced by the federal government and recent independent and government agency peer-reviewed studies. The limits, which would be annually reviewed, must be protective of the public health and no less stringent than limits adopted by the federal government.

Another piece of legislation closely being monitored by CORD is SB 273, which was introduced by Senator Sandra Williams (D-Cleveland). This legislation would prohibit local governments from placing a tax lien and foreclosing on property when service charges are unpaid. While the bill has been referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee, it has yet to receive a hearing.

Below is a list of legislation we are currently tracking during the 133rd Ohio General Assembly:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **HB7** | **H2OHIO PROGRAM** (GHANBARI H, PATTERSON J) To create the H2Ohio Trust Fund for the protection and preservation of Ohio's water quality, to create the H2Ohio Advisory Council to establish priorities for use of the Fund for water quality programs, and to authorize the Ohio Water Development Authority to invest the money in the Fund and to make recommendations to the Treasurer of State regarding the issuance of securities to pay for costs related to the purposes of the Fund. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/22/2019 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB27** | **PUBLIC MOTOR VEHICLE LIABILITY** (INGRAM C) To modify political subdivision liability for an employee's negligent operation of a motor vehicle. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/19/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB46** | **STATE GOVT EXPENDITURE DATABASE** (GREENSPAN D) To require the Treasurer of State to establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/22/2020 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, Senate General Government and Agency Review , (Seventh Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB62** | **TRANSPORTATION BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To increase the rate of and modify the distribution of revenue from motor fuel excise taxes, to make appropriations for programs related to transportation and public safety for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of those programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/3/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 90 days, Taxes eff. 7/1/19 |
|  | | |
| **HB78** | **PREVAILING WAGE-PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS** (RIEDEL C, MANCHESTER S) To allow political subdivisions, special districts, and state institutions of higher education to elect to apply the Prevailing Wage Law to public improvement projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/11/2019 - House Commerce and Labor, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB79** | **INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for the Industrial Commission for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of Commission programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/27/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; eff. 6/27/19 |
|  | | |
| **HB80** | **BWC BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the bureau's programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 7/22/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. Immediately |
|  | | |
| **HB84** | **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS-SEWER LATERALS** (HOLMES G) To expressly include, as eligible projects under the State Capital Improvements Program, water and sewer laterals located on private property. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 3/27/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB95** | **BRINE-CONVERSION OF WELLS** (SKINDELL M) To alter the Oil and Gas Law with respect to brine and the conversion of wells. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 9/17/2019 - House Energy and Natural Resources, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB115** | **REGULATOR RESTRICTION REDUCTION** (RIEDEL C, ROEMER B) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulator restrictions and to amend the versions of sections 106.021 and 106.03 of the Revised Code that are scheduled to take effect August 18, 2019, to continue the provision of this act on and after that effective date. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/10/2019 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB163** | **WATER AND SEWER PRACTICES** (BRINKMAN T) To create a process for withholding local government funds and state water and sewer assistance from municipal corporations that engage in certain water and sewer practices with respect to extraterritorial service. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Public Utilities, (Sixth Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB166** | **OPERATING BUDGET** (OELSLAGER S) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2021, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 7/18/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Eff. Immediately |
|  | | |
| **HB168** | **AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE-HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES** (ARNDT S) To establish an affirmative defense to a release or threatened release of hazardous substances from a facility for certain bona fide prospective purchasers. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/4/2019 - **REPORTED OUT**, Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources, (Fourth Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB197** | **TAX CODE CORRECTIONS** (POWELL J, MERRIN D) To enact the "Tax Code Streamlining and Correction Act" to make technical and corrective changes to the laws governing taxation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/25/2020 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, Senate Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB218** | **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS** (PATTON T) To authorize certain public entities to enter into public-private initiatives with a private party through a public-private agreement regarding public facilities. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/19/2019 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB220** | **GOVERNMENT BLOCKCHAIN USE** (CARFAGNA R) To allow a governmental entity to utilize distributed ledger technology, including blockchain technology. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/12/2019 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Third Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB238** | **WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS** (CERA J, SCHERER G) To revise Ohio's whistleblower protection laws. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Civil Justice, (Sixth Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB263** | **OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING-CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS** (KOEHLER K) To revise the initial occupational licensing restrictions applicable to individuals convicted of criminal offenses. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/5/2020 - **REPORTED OUT AS AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Fifth Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB264** | **WATER DEVELOPMENT-LOAN REFINANCING** (WILKIN S, O'BRIEN M) To allow the Ohio Water Development Authority to provide for the refinancing of loans for certain public water and waste water infrastructure projects. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/12/2019 - **PASSED BY HOUSE**; Vote 86-0 |
|  | | |
| **HB308** | **PTSD COVERAGE - FIRST RESPONDERS** (PATTON T) Concerning workers' compensation and disability retirement for peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical workers diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder arising from employment without an accompanying physical injury. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate General Government and Agency Review |
|  | | |
| **HB326** | **PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT-DISABILITY BENEFIT** (MILLER A) To allow a Public Employees Retirement System or School Employees Retirement System disability benefit recipient elected to certain offices to continue receiving a disability benefit during the term of office. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 11/12/2019 - House Insurance, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB340** | **DRAINAGE LAW** (CUPP B) To revise the state's drainage laws. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2020 - House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB343** | **EMERGENCY WATER AND SEWER** (PATTERSON J) To make an appropriation related to emergency water and sewer system funding. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/26/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB368** | **COMPUTER CRIMES** (BALDRIDGE B) To enact the Ohio Computer Crimes Act. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/20/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Criminal Justice, (Fifth Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB370** | **HISTORICAL SYMBOLS, MONUMENTS** (HILLYER B, BALDRIDGE B) To allow the Attorney General to defend political subdivisions in certain actions brought under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or analogous provisions of the Ohio Constitution. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/10/2019 - House Civil Justice, (Third Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB380** | **CONTRACTOR PAYMENT DEADLINE** (CROSS J, SWEENEY B) To require owners of construction projects to pay a contractor within thirty-five days of receiving a request for payment. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/5/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Commerce and Labor, (Third Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB398** | **GENERAL ELECTIONS - LEGAL HOLIDAY** (CRAWLEY E, SWEENEY B) To establish the day of each general election as a legal holiday for which government employees receive paid leave. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 11/12/2019 - Referred to Committee House State and Local Government |
|  | | |
| **HB427** | **SAFE DRINKING WATER LAW - CONTAMINANTS** (WIGGAM S) To alter the requirements governing secondary contaminants under the Safe Drinking Water Law. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2020 - House Public Utilities, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB468** | **HANDHELD ELECTRONIC DEVICE WHILE DRIVING** (LIGHTBODY M) To alter the law governing the use of a handheld electronic wireless communications device while driving. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2020 - House Transportation and Public Safety, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB476** | **EMINENT DOMAIN** (MANNING D, HAMBLEY S) To amend the law regarding eminent domain and to declare an emergency. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2020 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **HB497** | **SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT** (LIGHTBODY M, RUSSO A) To require the Director of Environmental Protection to adopt rules establishing maximum allowable contaminant levels in drinking water and water quality standards for certain contaminants. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2020 - Referred to Committee House Health |
|  | | |
| **HB507** | **DELINQUENT TAX LIEN PAYMENTS** (MANNING D) To prohibit enforcement of delinquent property tax liens against owner-occupied homesteads and to require that any delinquent tax be paid before the title to a homestead may be transferred. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/19/2020 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means |
|  | | |
| **HJR2** | **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION AMENDMENT** (MANNING D, CALLENDER J) Proposing to enact Section 12 of Article XV of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to provide Ohio critical infrastructure protection. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/30/2019 - House Energy and Natural Resources, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB1** | **REDUCE REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS** (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions and to continue the provision of this act on and after August 18, 2019. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/12/2019 - House State and Local Government, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB2** | **STATEWIDE WATERSHED PLANNING** (PETERSON B, DOLAN M) To create a statewide watershed planning structure for watershed programs to be implemented by local soil and water conservation districts. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/19/2020 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Energy and Natural Resources, (Fifth Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB8** | **TAX CREDITS-OHIO OPPORTUNITY ZONE** (SCHURING K) To authorize tax credits for investments in an Ohio Opportunity Zone. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/8/2019 - House Economic and Workforce Development, (Second Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB10** | **THEFT IN OFFICE PENALTIES** (WILSON S) To expand the penalties for theft in office based on the amount stolen and to include as restitution audit costs of the entity that suffered the loss. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/29/2019 - Re-Referred to Committee |
|  | | |
| **SB33** | **CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES OFFENSES** (HOAGLAND F) To modify certain criminal offenses with respect to critical infrastructure facilities and to impose fines and civil liability for damage to a critical infrastructure facility. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 1/29/2020 - **REPORTED OUT**, House Public Utilities, (Seventh Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB38** | **WATER AND SEWER FUNDS-MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS** (SCHURING K) To revise the law governing municipal corporation use of water and sewer funds. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/17/2019 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB50** | **INCREASE SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL FEE** (EKLUND J) To increase state solid waste disposal fee that is deposited into the Soil and Water Conservation District Assistance Fund, and to make an appropriation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 4/2/2019 - Senate Finance, (Second Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB86** | **UTILITY SERVICE RESELLERS** (MAHARATH T) To regulate certain resellers of utility service. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/10/2019 - Senate Energy and Public Utilities, (Third Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB135** | **DEFERRED COMPENSATION-AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT** (HOTTINGER J) To authorize automatic enrollment of new employees in the Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Program. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 5/15/2019 - Referred to Committee Senate General Government and Agency Review |
|  | | |
| **SB171** | **17-DAY INTERIM BUDGET** (DOLAN M, O'BRIEN S) To enact a 17-day interim budget. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/30/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Effective Immediately |
|  | | |
| **SB172** | **30 DAY BWC BUDGET** (DOLAN M, O'BRIEN S) To make operating appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the period beginning July 1, 2019, and ending July 31, 2019. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 6/30/2019 - **SIGNED BY GOVERNOR**; Effective Immediately |
|  | | |
| **SB219** | **APPRENTICE PROGRAM** (WILLIAMS S) To establish a career pathways apprentice program. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/11/2020 - Senate Education, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB244** | **CERTIFICATES OF TRANSITION** (RULLI M) To require fiscal officers of certain political subdivisions to provide certificates of transition to their successors when leaving office. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 12/10/2019 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB249** | **REQUIRE RESTROOM WITH ADULT CHANGING STATION** (LEHNER P) To enact Matthew's Law, requiring public buildings to have at least one rest room facility with an adult changing station and authorizing an income tax credit for installation. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2020 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (First Hearing) |
|  | | |
| **SB273** | **REDUCE PROPERTY TAXES** (WILLIAMS S) To reduce property taxes on owner-occupied homes to the extent the taxes increase by more than 10% per year and to prohibit political subdivisions from placing a lien on property for unpaid water charges. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2020 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways and Means |
|  | | |
| **SB279** | **PROHIBIT PHONES WHILE DRIVING** (MAHARATH T) To generally prohibit the use of electronic wireless devices while driving. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/12/2020 - Introduced |
|  | | |
| **SB285** | **DISTRACTED DRIVING** (O'BRIEN S, KUNZE S) To revise the laws relative to distracted driving and the use of an electronic wireless communications device while driving. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 2/18/2020 - Introduced |
|  | | |
| **SJR1** | **CLEAN WATER IMPROVEMENTS** (GAVARONE T, O'BRIEN S) Proposing to enact Section 2t of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to permit the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund clean water improvements. | |
|  | ***Current Status:*** | 10/1/2019 - Senate Finance, (First Hearing) |