
THE CORD REPORT

The official quarterly newsletter of CORD Ohio



CORD LEGISLATIVE AND LEGAL SUCCESSSES

Since CORD was founded in 2005, CORD has achieved, among many other successes, the following notable legislative and legal successes which have significantly advanced the interests of Regional Districts state wide.

- Prevented legislation which would have prohibited the construction of Regional District water and sewer lines within 1,000 feet of County or Municipal lines.

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- Prevented legislation which would have enabled persons to prevent the formation of a District or terminate a District by petition.
 - Increased the threshold cost for public bidding from \$25,000.00 to \$50,000.00 for District projects.
 - Prevented legislation to curb the authority of Districts to certify assessments for delinquent accounts for rental property customers.
 - Implemented R.C. 505.705 to enable Townships to pay costs associated with planning, designing, and constructing District projects.
 - Filed amicus brief in the case of Dugan and Meyers Construction Company vs. Ohio State University opposing certain contractor claims against District's outside of the scope of the construction contract.
 - Filed amicus brief in the case of Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District vs. Bath Township confirming the authority of District's to provide storm water services and levy a fee (not a voted tax) for such services.
 - Enacted legislation to allow elected officials to serve on District boards.
 - Prevented an amendment to R.C. Chapter 6119 which would have required storm water fees to be assessed as a voted tax rather than a fee.
 - Enacted an amendment to R.C. Chapter 6119.061 expanding the contracting authority of a Regional District and preserving the District's authority to continue to provide services to areas annexed to municipalities.
- Current Legislative Efforts by CORD:**
- HB 249- Submetering Bill, seeking to prevent PUCO regulation of District rate setting.
 - HB 312- Credit Card Uniformity Bill, seeking to implement credit card uniformity that does not adversely affect Districts.
 - HB 276- Utility Worker Safety Legislation, seeking to implement harsher criminal penalties for those threatening District employees.
 - SB 31- Household Sewage Treatment Systems, seeking to prevent landowners from opting out of connecting to District sewer lines.
 - SB 95 and HB 121- Piping Preference Bill, seeking to allow Districts to choose sewer and water main material based on engineering recommendations.
 - HB 221- Water and Sewer Lateral Lines, seeking to allow OPWC funding to be used for the maintenance and replacement of private lateral lines.
 - Operator Certification Rules, seeking to oppose OEPA rules related to the employment of certified operators making it more difficult and costly to employ such operators.

- SB 250- Ohio Critical Infrastructure Bill, seeking to increase penalties for tampering with or damaging critical infrastructure, including District facilities.

- SB 239- Council of Governments Reform, supporting legislation providing more transparency and oversight to councils of government and protecting sovereign immunity for Districts.



CORD Agenda for Future Legislation Beneficial to Districts:

1. Legislation to require ODOT to pay for moving water and sewer lines located within the road right-of-way during road improvement projects.

2. Continued legislative effort to prevent future PUCO regulation of District rate setting.

3. Reform legislation providing for expanded "quick-take" eminent domain authority for Districts.

4. Reform legislation preventing municipalities from taking District customers through annexation where state funding is utilized (similar to USDA 1926(b) protection for federal loans).

5. Reform legislation allowing for easier and more frequent certification of delinquent charges to County Auditors for placement on the tax list and duplicate.

6. Legislation enabling Districts to apply directly for CDBG Funding.

7. Reform legislation permitting simpler disconnection procedures for delinquent customers.

8. Reform legislation clarifying which personal services do not require competitive bidding.

9. Increase the authority of Districts to construct their own projects through force account.

10. Remove ambiguities in R.C. Chapter 6119 relating to adding District territory.

11. Permit fines for violations of District regulations.



USDA Funding Update

The Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. The program assists qualified applicants who are not otherwise able to obtain commercial credit on reasonable terms. Eligible applicants include:

- Most state and local government entities
- Private non-profits
- Federally-recognized tribes

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CORD VISITS SYSTEM MEMBERS

Recently several CORD representatives have visited past and present members of CORD by attending their board meetings. We wanted to make an effort to visit some of the 6119's that have supported the coalition and share with them some of the successes that have been made on their behalf. We also wanted to introduce ourselves to any new board members who may not be aware of the history of CORD and the impact we have had on legislation that affects 6119 systems.

As you may know the purpose of CORD is to prevent legislation that will negatively impact 6119 systems while encouraging legislation that will have positive effects on the management and operation of these same systems.

We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the boards and managers of Allen County Water, Henry County Commissioners and the Ayersville Water for their hospitality and allowing us time to make a brief presentation during their board meetings. I would like to personally thank Jerry Greiner for his help introducing me to the personnel and legal counsel for these systems.

In addition to giving us an opportunity to discuss recent legislative activity, it gave us the chance to visit with past members to thank them for their support and to encourage them to continue membership in the coalition, and for those who are not members to consider doing so in order to help continue this vital service for 6119 systems across Ohio. We are making an ongoing effort to visit 6119 systems across the state and are looking forward to visiting more of our members soon.

Kevin Strang
Membership Director





Phishing

Cybercrime becomes more serious and pervasive by the month as hackers get better at tricking people into clicking on fraudulent links or opening malicious email attachments. To combat these trends, The District has initiated a comprehensive security awareness training program through a widely used vendor called KnowBe4.

The training began with a simulated phishing attack against all of our users. Employees received an email claiming to be from IT that asked users immediately to click a link to change their passwords. In a real phishing attack, anyone clicking on the link would in fact have been sharing their District login credentials with the hacker. The percentage of users who "fell" for this attack (i.e., clicked on the link to change their password) was 14%. By way of context, the average for the utility industry is 32%, and for government it is 29%.

In the coming weeks, users will receive an email invitation to the first of KnowBe4's online training modules. The module takes about 45 minutes to complete. Note that private computers and email are also vulnerable to phishing attacks, and the knowledge gained from the training is equally applicable to personal devices.



For more information on membership and member benefits please feel free to contact CORD's Director of Membership, Kevin Strang.

Contact Information:

kevin.strang70@gmail.com