

Ohio Marine Trades Association
and Government Advantage Group

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

APRIL 2024



HPIO Water Quality Research

The Health Policy Institute of Ohio, a healthcare research entity, recently release a report of interest to OMTA. It is titled: Connections between water quality and health. You can read the full report here. But the key findings for policymakers were:

- Improving water quality, including a reduction in lead exposure, will lead to improved health for Ohioans.
- There is a strong policy foundation for Ohio policymakers to build on to improve water quality, such as investments in H2Ohio, and guard against new challenges.
- State and local policymakers have opportunities to improve water quality, such as increasing investment in water infrastructure, ecosystem restoration and evaluating the impact of industrial and commercial development.

TechCred Program

The Office of Workforce Development announced their most recent opportunity for employers to apply for grants to cover the cost of upskilling employees with industry recognized credentials. the application period for Ohio employers opened March 1, 2024, and closed on March 29, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. The next application period will be May 1 - 31, 2024. You would apply at TechCred.Ohio.Gov.

Marine Diagnostics is one of the recognized credentials if you are interested in taking advantage of this program to help cover the cost of training.

Governor Makes Waterways Safety Council Appointments

Governor DeWine has made the following appointments to the ODNR Waterways Safety Council.

- Peg VanVleet of Huber Heights (Montgomery Co.) has been appointed for a term beginning March 29, 2024, and ending January 31, 2029.
- Brewster Rhoads of Cincinnati (Hamilton Co.) has been appointed for a term beginning March 29, 2024, and ending January 31, 2028.

Michelle Burke continues to serve on this Advisory Council.

Capital Funding

Before breaking to campaign for the March Primaries, the Ohio Senate added \$198 million in funding for the State fairgrounds along with other large capital expenditure into House Bill 27 (the original bill was unrelated). This was included at the request of Governor DeWine for their construction and redesign project. The House would need to concur with this for it to be formally approved. The House had previously passed House Bill 2. This contains the House's capital spending plans, but has not been taken up by the Senate.

The House's proposal was more encompassing and looked more like a traditional capital bill. The House included the following earmarks of interest to OMTA. We expect the House and Senate to come together on a final spending plan before breaking for the summer.

- Mosquito Lake State Park Water Improvements \$330,350
- Kelley's Island East Lakeshore Shoreline Protection \$100,000
- Regional Safety Center at Tappan Lake \$450,000
- Lake Metroparks Lakefront Trail \$500,000
- Mentor on the Lake - Lake Overlook \$300,000
- Buckeye Lake North Shore Park and Pier \$10,000,000
- Indian Lake Advocacy Group \$5,000,000
- Lake Medina \$1,500,000
- Mosquito Lake State Park Water Improvements \$330,350
- Huron Boat Basin and Amphitheater Capital Improvement Project \$200,000
- The Landing in Erie County \$3,000,000

Primary Election Result

Ohioans went to the polls on March 19th for a primary election considering races for the state legislature, US Senate, US Congress, and Ohio Supreme Court. Overall turnout was very low with only about 20% of the electorate turning out to cast their ballots.

Races for the Ohio House on the Republican side drew a lot of attention as numerous incumbents saw challenges from within their own party. This can certainly be tied back to the 2023 vote for Speaker when 22 Republicans joined all House Democrats to elect Speaker Jason Stephens over Derek Merrin. These members ran without the endorsement of the Ohio Republican Party but did have the benefit of incumbency and, in most cases, a sizable fundraising advantage. We did see several incumbents upset by challengers. Those representatives not prevailing in their primaries were: Sara Carruthers (R), Jon Cross (R), Elliot Forhan (D), Brett Hillyer (R), and Gail Pavliga (R). OMTA was pleased to Representative DJ Swearingen make it through is primary with a sizable victory.

With the Presidential primary drawing little fanfare in Ohio, the spotlight was on the Republican Primary to nominate the candidate to challenge Senator Sherrod Brown. Bernie Moreno earned the backing of President Trump and Ohio's Republican US Senator JD Vance. Senator Matt Dolan earned high-profile endorsements from Governor Mike DeWine and former US Senator Rob Portman. Secretary of State Frank LaRose ran with the endorsement of Congressman Mike Turner and was the only candidate who had previously won a statewide election. It was Moreno that came out on top and will face off against Senator Brown in November in what is expected to be one of the most closely watched races in the country.