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SCHAFFER REINTRODUCES WATER AFFORDABILITY LEGISLATION
BILL WILL LOWER WATER RATES, PROTECT JOBS

COLUMBUS — Seeking to ensure lower water rates for customers and steady utility rates for business, Senator Tim Schaffer (R- Lancaster), this week reintroduced legislation from last session which will require the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to consider the local financial impact when issuing permits for long-term sewage and storm water control projects.

“My goal with this legislation is to provide more flexibility for Ohio’s municipalities when creating and implementing these massive sewer and water infrastructure improvements that are being mandated by federal law,” Schaffer said. “This bill will help lower costs to our cities, which means lower costs for consumers. When we stabilize utility rates it also means Ohio becomes more attractive to businesses that are looking to expand.”

Senator Schaffer explained that local governments across Ohio are being required by federal law to undertake extensive upgrades to their water and sewer systems in an effort to improve water quality and aging infrastructure. However, these can often cost tens of millions of dollars and cause dramatic increases in utility rates for families and businesses.

“My legislation will require the Ohio EPA to use the full flexibility granted by federal law when forcing local governments to upgrade sewer systems,” Schaffer said.

This legislation came about after the City of Lancaster expressed frustration when ratepayers were forced to endure massive, overwhelming water and sewer costs.

“I look forward to working with the new administration’s leadership at the Ohio EPA. I believe now is the time to address this issue head on to make sure we keep water and sewer rates during these tough economic times,” Schaffer said

Schaffer’s bill, Senate Bill 17, follows similar procedures to those currently followed in Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Virginia.