

Dayton Source Water Protection Program Testimony
City of Dayton Plan Board
Stephanie Precht
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce
March 10, 2015

Good afternoon, my name is Stephanie Precht, and I am the Director of Public Policy and Economic Development for the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. As the largest regional business advocate in the greater Dayton region, the Chamber represents nearly 2,700 businesses and organizations across nine counties. Beginning in May, 2014, the Chamber hosted a series of roundtables with our members and leaders from the business community concerning the proposed changes to the City of Dayton's Source Water Protection Program. These sessions provided an opportunity for property and business owners to share concerns with water department & economic development officials about regulations that impact their daily operations.

From those sessions, we heard time and time again from our members that flexibility to safely and responsibly grow and expand business operations was their top concern. For the businesses that are located in the protection area, economic development and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive goals. Since the inception of the Source Water Protection Program, the vast majority of businesses have worked with city officials to ensure environmental standards are being met, as evidenced by the fact that there have been no fines levied against businesses for source water protection violations in the history of the program and the fact that the same production wells are still in use. No one benefits if our water resources are polluted, and from the very beginning, the business community has been committed to acting as equal partners in the protection of this resource.

Yet, historically, these same businesses have met repeated obstacles when seeking to expand and grow their operations. As the roundtables displayed, the business community strongly supports the introduction of flexibility and equity into regulation process. We believe that the Department of Water clearly heard

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this input, and worked to incorporate it into the new draft of the Source Water Protection changes, released in November 2014.

To this end, the Chamber has endorsed the Source Water Protection program revisions with the following focus areas :

- The establishment of a workable variance process is absolutely key and the we urge the Water Department and Board of Zoning Appeals to ensure that the variance application “works at the speed of business” and provides an unambiguous, concise and streamlined avenue for businesses to pursue growth opportunities.
- We strongly support the continued inclusion of both the minor variance process, which allows for direct approval of requests less than 10,000 pounds by the Zoning Administrator as well as the regular variance process which must be approved by BZA.
- We continue to advocate for a small business representative on the EAB, as recommended by the Water Department. This ensures that businesses will be informed of proposed regulations and be part of the ongoing dialogue regarding policies that impact their daily operations.

The City of Dayton’s Source Water Protection Program has been lauded as an innovative policy that balances environmental protection and economic development. It is important that the regulations reflect those twin goals in practice, as well as intent, and the proposed changes are in important step towards ensuring that.