



2016 Caucuses & Forum with State Lawmakers

County Caucus Notes

Thursday, August 4, 2016

Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions – The County Caucus met on August 4, 2016 at 9 a.m. at Penta Career Center (Room 1115), 9301 Buck Road in Perrysburg, Ohio.

Wood County Commissioner Doris Herringshaw, the facilitator of the Counties Caucus, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

Members in attendance included:

- Carol Contrada – Commissioner, Lucas County
- Keith Earley – County Engineer, Lucas County
- Doris Herringshaw – Commissioner, Wood County
- Ray Huber – County Engineer, Wood County
- Andrew Kalmar – Administrator, Wood County
- Joel Kuhlman – Commissioner, Wood County
- Craig LaHote – Commissioner, Wood County
- John Musteric – Deputy Engineer, Wood County
- Michelle Niedermier – Deputy Director of Finance and Operations, Lucas County
Department of Jobs & Family Services
- Kelly O’Boyle – Assistant Administrator, Wood County
- Jo Ellen Regal – Commissioner, Ottawa County
- Rhonda Slauterbeck – Administrator, Ottawa County
- Mark Stahl – Commissioner, Ottawa County
- Greg Telecky – Managing Principal Owner, Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc.

TMACOG support staff that was present included:

- Tim Brown – President, TMACOG
- Lance Dasher – Transportation Planner, TMACOG

Topic Discussion – The following topics were discussed by County Caucus members.

- **Health of Lake Erie**
 - There were in depth discussions regarding the health of Lake Erie from multiple standpoints. The main topic on Lake Erie was the status of the Maumee River Basin being classified as an “impaired” watershed according to EPA under section 303D of the Clean Water Act. This has not yet been established. There was discussion regarding potential funding arising from this potential designation. It was stated that money is needed on the “front lines” with the local jurisdictions fixing problems that they cannot currently afford to make.

- There was funding awarded for water quality research around Ohio, and the group inquired on where the funding went and what the recipients of the funding were doing with the funds. There does not seem to be an easy way to determine this information.
- The group asked if TMACOG can coordinate all of the different meetings and conferences regarding water quality in the region. The group also requested that TMACOG work with SEMCOG on water quality so the two visions are cohesive with one another.
- **Sewer Systems**
 - The group discussed HB 58, legislation that would allow citizens to opt out of sewer systems. The group agreed that this would not be good public policy in the long run. The group discussed that TMACOG has a Waste Water Committee. They were invited to attend those meetings to gain better knowledge of what is going on in the region regarding all facets of waste water.
 - There was discussion of how some of the problems that are encountered are minor fixes in the bigger picture of issues with water quality in the region. The issue is there isn't enough funding to fix the minor problems. The group agreed that fixing the minor problems on the individual basis could be extremely beneficial to the region's water quality. There needs to be some sort of funding for the "front lines".
- **Health Departments**
 - There was general discussion that the funding of county health departments has been reduced over the years, and they are the ones on the "front lines" of the water quality issue. There does not seem to be any increased funding for health departments at the state level, the group asked if there was any plan to increase that funding at the state level.

Due to time constraints, caucus members were unable to discuss the following topics.

- Roadway infrastructure how the counties are experiencing higher costs to maintain infrastructure but no increased funding from the state level. The group asked if the state would consider a gas tax increase.
- The current opiate epidemic in Northwest Ohio. The group asked if a possible TMACOG Tech could be held on this subject.
- There will no longer be tax on Medicaid services. This will greatly impact tax revenues for counties.

Next Steps – There were no requested actions from the caucus.

Adjourn – The chair adjourned the meeting