

## LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – March 31, 2015

### Land Use

#### *Kristin Vessey, Land Use Specialist*

The 131<sup>st</sup> General Assembly has begun (2015) and all unpassed bills from last year that our legislators hope will pass have to be reintroduced & renumbered. Remember that as an umbrella category, Land Use (LU) can include such topics as brownfields, water issues, fracking, marijuana fields, transportation, manure, etc. Right now, the problems of Lake Erie seem foremost and the legislators are working on ways to approach the pollution and algae, although Senator Gardner claims that in the interest of passage they will not now work on rules for the entire watershed, thwarting, we fear, real improvement in the lake.

During the early months of 2015, bills associated with the northwest Ohio algae blooms were rushing through both Senate (**SB1**) and House (**HB61**). LWVO supported both bills as good first steps, but with reservations. We have made several suggestions for improvements. Senator Edna Brown's (D-Toledo) **SB16** also aims to fix Lake Erie but more sensibly defines manure as fertilizer and prohibits spreading it on frozen ground *statewide*. Apparently only the former bills will have traction. Sad, when we know what's needed. The budget (**HB64**) also contains language on waste disposal, which we will follow.

As of late February six other bills that we will watch have been submitted; when more come along we'll watch them too. Nothing about brownfields or other issues that could use work has appeared as yet. The rest of LU list thus far:

**SB45** = LAKE ERIE SHORELINE IMPROVEMENT

**SB46** = LAKE ERIE DRILLING BAN

**SB47** = DEEP WELL BRINE INJECTION PROHIBITION

**SB61** = LAKE ERIE FERTILIZER-DREDGING

**HB8** = OIL-GAS LAW

**HB23** = OIL-GAS LEASE INCOME

Regarding public transit, the ODOT director, Jerry Wray, said 27 counties have none, nor does the department have the money for expansion, so for the next 10 years they will just concentrate on maintenance rather than expansion (Hannah, 2/12/15).

What can we do? Keep letting your legislators know that the entire state needs to prohibit winter application of fertilizer (manure) and that really the entire watershed needs the same treatment.