February 23, 2012

The Honorable Lynn R. Wachtmann
Chair, House Committee on Health and Aging
Ohio House of Representatives
Riffe State Office Tower
77 S. High Street
13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111

SUBJECT: Ohio House Bill 416
POSITION: Support

Dear Representative Wachtmann:

The National Environmental Health Association – which represents the interests and expertise of the environmental health profession across our nation – through the efforts of our Ohio affiliate, the Ohio Environmental Health Association, became aware of the above-captioned Ohio House Bill and has reviewed the proposed legislation which revises current Ohio State Law regulating the swimming pool industry in Ohio.

This bill provides the necessary legal components for public health officials to protect swimmers from disease and injury. Local health departments performing the regulatory inspections of licensed public swimming pools and spas must have the authority to immediately close a pool under the authority of the health commissioner if an immediate health threat is recognized by the health department environmental health professional conducting an inspection. This bill provides that much needed authority.

Furthermore, House Bill 416 would allow for officials to require training for those operators demonstrating a failure to maintain standards of operation. Data suggests that operators who complete some level of training operate a safer recreational water facility. Studies also have demonstrated a direct correlation between operator training and a reduction in violations.

NEHA fully supports House Bill 416 and applauds Representative Blair on his motivation and resolve on this important piece of public health legislation. The National Environmental Health Association, in support of our Ohio state affiliate, strongly urges the Ohio legislature to pass Ohio House Bill 416.

Very truly yours,

Mel Knight, REHS
President

cc:
Ohio Representative Anne Gonzales, Vice Chair House Committee on Health and Aging
Ohio Representative Terry Blair, 38th District
Adam London, RS, MPH, NEHA Region 6 Vice-President
Luke K. Jacobs, President, OEHA
Zach Holzapfel, Hicks Partners, LLC