

OHIO ISSUES REPORT

State Issue Ballot Information for the
November 7, 2000 General Election



Distributed By
The Ohio Ballot Board
Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell
Chairman

This publication gives Ohioans an opportunity to compare the arguments for and against the statewide issue on the November 7 ballot. The ballot language and explanation for Issue 1 were written by the nonpartisan Ohio Ballot Board. The arguments for and against Issue 1 were written by the individuals listed and are printed as submitted to my office.

We urge all Ohioans to study the issue carefully and then vote on November 7.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Kenneth Blackwell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

OHIO BALLOT BOARD

Chairman

Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell

State Senator Ben Espy

State Senator Robert Cupp

Mr. William N. Morgan

Mr. Thomas R. Winters

ISSUE 1

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

(Proposed by Resolution of the General Assembly of Ohio)

1 To adopt Section 2o of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

This proposed amendment would:

1. Authorize the state to issue bonds and other obligations to pay the costs of projects for environmental conservation and revitalization purposes.
2. Specify “conservation purposes” as meaning the conservation and preservation of natural areas, open spaces, and farmlands and other lands devoted to agriculture, including by acquiring land or interests therein; the provision of state and local park and recreation facilities, and other actions that permit and enhance the availability, public use, and enjoyment of natural areas and open spaces in Ohio; and land, forest, water and other natural resource management projects.
3. Specify “revitalization purposes” as meaning providing for and enabling the environmentally safe and productive development and use or reuse of publicly and privately owned lands, including those within urban areas, by the remediation or clean up of contamination; and addressing by clearance, land acquisition or otherwise, contamination or other property conditions or circumstances that might be deleterious to the public health and safety and the environment and water and other natural resources, or that preclude or inhibit environmentally sound or economic use of the property.
4. Limit the total outstanding principal amount of all state

obligations issued for conservation purposes, which shall be general obligations of the state backed by the full faith and credit, revenue, and taxing power of the state, to two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000) and the principal amount of all new obligations issued within a single fiscal year to fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) plus the principal amount of obligations that in any prior fiscal year could have been but were not issued within the fifty million dollar (\$50,000,000) fiscal year limit.

5. Limit the total outstanding principal amount of all state obligations issued for revitalization purposes, which shall not be general obligations of the state and shall not be backed by the full faith and credit, revenue, and taxing power of the state but which would be secured by a pledge of designated state revenues and receipts as the General Assembly authorizes, to two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000) and the principal amount of all new obligations issued within a single fiscal year to fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) plus the principal amount of obligations that in any prior fiscal year could have been but were not issued within the fifty million dollar (\$50,000,000) fiscal year limit.

6. Require that the obligations mature no later than December 31 of the twenty-fifth (25th) calendar year after issuance, except that obligations issued to refund or retire other obligations must mature no later than December 31 of the twenty-fifth (25th) calendar year after the year in which the original obligation to pay was issued or entered into.

7. Determine and confirm that state and local governmental participation in and financial assistance to environmental and related conservation, preservation and revitalization projects are public purposes, authorize the state to participate or assist in the financing of those projects undertaken by local governmental entities or by others, including not-for-profit organizations, and specify that these activities would not be subject to the lending aid and credit prohibitions of Sections 4 and 6 of Article VIII of the Ohio

Constitution.

If adopted, this amendment shall take immediate effect.

A majority yes vote is necessary for passage.

	YES	SHALL THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT BE ADOPTED?
	NO	

**EXPLANATION OF STATE ISSUE 1
(As prepared by the Ohio Ballot Board)**

1. This amendment allows the passage of laws permitting the state to issue bonds and other obligations to pay the costs of projects for environmental conservation and revitalization purposes.
2. This amendment defines “conservation purposes” to mean the conservation and preservation of natural areas, open spaces, and farmlands and other lands, devoted to agriculture, including by acquiring land or interests in land; the provision of state and local park and recreation facilities, and other actions that permit and enhance the availability, public use, and enjoyment of natural areas and open spaces in Ohio; and land, forest, water and other natural resource management projects.
3. This amendment defines “revitalization purposes” to mean providing for and enabling the environmentally safe and productive development and use or reuse of publicly and privately owned lands, including those within urban areas, by the remediation or clean up of contamination; and addressing by clearance, land acquisition or otherwise, contamination or other property conditions or circumstances that might be deleterious to the public health and safety and the environment and water and other natural resources, or that preclude or inhibit environmentally sound or economic use of the property.
4. This amendment limits the principal amount of state obligations for conservation purposes that can be outstanding at any time to no more

than two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000), and limits the amount that can be borrowed in any one fiscal year to no more than fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) plus the amount that could have been but wasn't borrowed in any prior fiscal year up to this fifty million dollar (\$50,000,000) limit. The bonds and other obligations issued for conservation purposes would be general obligations of the state, backed by the full faith and credit, revenue, and taxing power of the state.

5. This amendment limits the principal amount of state obligations for revitalization purposes that can be outstanding at any time to no more than two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000), and limits the amount that can be borrowed in any one fiscal year to no more than fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) plus the amount that could have been but wasn't borrowed in any prior fiscal year up to this fifty million dollar (\$50,000,000) limit. The bonds and other obligations issued for revitalization purposes would not be general obligations of the state and would not be backed by the full faith and credit, revenue, and taxing power of the state. They would be secured by a pledge of designated state revenues and receipts as the General Assembly authorizes.
6. This amendment requires that the obligations mature no later than December 31 of the twenty-fifth (25th) calendar year after issuance, except that obligations issued to refund or retire other obligations must mature no later than December 31 of the twenty-fifth (25th) calendar year after the year in which the original obligation to pay was issued or entered into.
7. This amendment determines and confirms that state and local governmental participation in and financial assistance to environmental and related conservation, preservation and revitalization projects are public purposes; authorizes the state to participate or assist in the financing of those projects undertaken by local governmental entities or by others, including not-for-profit organizations; and specifies that these activities would not be subject to the prohibitions against lending aid and credit in Sections 4 and 6 of Article VIII of the Ohio Constitution. To the extent that state obligations are payable from state General Revenue Fund resources, their issuance would be subject to the five per cent (5%) "cap" on state debt service under Section 17 of Article VIII of the Ohio Constitution. Pursuant to Section 5a of Article XII of the Ohio Constitution, money raised from motor vehicle related revenues could not be used for the payment of debt service on obligations issued under this amendment.

Argument for State Issue 1

State Issue 1 would allow the State of Ohio to issue \$400 million in bonds for the conservation and revitalization of land and water in our state.

Issue 1 seeks to improve and preserve the quality of life for all Ohioans:

- Issue 1 will help keep our state’s drinking water, rivers and streams clean, preserve and protect wildlife and their habitats, and expand outdoor recreational opportunities for all Ohioans.
- Issue 1 will reduce the number of polluted industrial sites and clean up brownfields (property left abandoned due to real or perceived contamination) to stimulate economic development in urban areas and private investment in our state.
- Passage of Issue 1 will not let polluters off the hook for the damage that they have caused. Polluters can still be held accountable and be required to pay for cleanup.
- Issue 1 will not require a tax increase but can be paid off with current liquor profits and general state revenues.
- Passage of Issue 1 is anticipated to generate other sources of investment, including funds from the federal government and the private sector for local governments to use to protect the environment and to preserve greenspace.

How does Issue 1 work?

Two funds of \$200 million each would be created. The conservation fund would be used to preserve open space, maintain local watersheds, and develop bike paths and other recreational trails. The revitalization fund would support brownfields cleanup and redevelopment, as well as urban renewal. Eligible projects would include site acquisition, demolition, and pollution cleanup.

Issue 1 would contribute to a clean, safe and healthy environment for all Ohioans, leaving a legacy that future generations deserve.

Vote YES on State Issue 1.

COMMITTEE TO PREPARE ARGUMENT FOR STATE ISSUE 1

Senator James Carnes	Representative James Mettler
Senator Eric Fingerhut	Representative Kirk Schuring
Senator Robert Gardner	Representative Mike Stevens
Senator Anthony Latell	Representative Erin Sullivan

Argument in Opposition to State Issue 1

Issue 1 proposes a Constitutional amendment to allow the state to issue new debt of up to \$400 million evenly split for land conservation and land revitalization purposes. The \$400 million can be reissued, without a vote of the people, as it is retired and the fund would operate in perpetuity. The new debt authority, similar to a person getting his/her debt limit raised on a credit card, is unnecessary considering the following.

Issue 1 is a poorly targeted program that will have little impact on urban sprawl, farmland protection, or urban revitalization. This program would conserve less than 1% of Ohio's farmland and open space at a cost of hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars.

According to the Legislative Budget Office (LBO), the cost of repaying the \$200 million for conservation purposes over 20 years could reach \$303 million. LBO also estimates the cost of repaying the \$200 million for revitalization purposes over 20 years could exceed \$308 million.

The allocation of funds for land conservation and land revitalization should be subject to the public budget process, which would allow for the approval of projects before the allocation of funding; therefore, the issuance of new debt is not necessary. The State should not be given the authority to issue new debt for a program that is a token attempt at conservation and revitalization.

Vote NO on Issue 1.

COMMITTEE TO PREPARE ARGUMENT AGAINST STATE ISSUE 1

Senator Lynn R. Wachtmann

Representative Bill Taylor

Dates To Remember

October 3

Absentee balloting begins.

November 4 at noon

Deadline for applying for an absentee ballot by mail for the November 7 election.

November 6

Deadline for voting an absentee ballot in person at a county board of elections for the November 7 election.

November 7 Election Day

Polls open 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.



For more information contact:

Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell
180 E. Broad Street, 15th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Telephone: (614) 466-2585
<http://www.chiospirit.org>

election@sos.state.ch.us