Fuel Quality Testing Bill Introduced
Reynolds Applauds Bipartisan Legislation

HAMILTON, Ohio – Butler County Auditor Roger Reynolds has his name on every fuel pump in the county. But until he can test motor fuel for quality as well as quantity, drivers are not being protected as much as they might think. So he’s been working with legislators to beef up those protections.

To Reynolds, and other auditors in the area, the solution seems simple: allow county auditors to do fuel quality tests themselves. Weights and Measures inspectors for each county annually test pumps for quantity – making sure consumers get a gallon of fuel when they purchase a gallon of fuel. With the accuracy of portable testing equipment available now, inspectors could easily add the motor fuel quality tests to their routine.

State Rep. George Lang (R-West Chester) and Rep. Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati) agree and worked up House Bill 499, which was introduced on Feb. 10 and recently assigned to the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee.

“I believe if county auditors are provided the authority to test we’ll reduce the number of vehicles damaged by tainted fuel,” said Reynolds. “I’m very appreciative of the work put in by Representatives Lang and Kelly. This issue has garnered bipartisan support because it’s a common sense approach that is cost effective.”

Reynolds said the startup cost in Butler County would be $10,000 to $12,000 to purchase testing equipment, an amount that can be worked into the office’s budget.
HB 499 allows county auditors to implement a fuel quality testing program but does not require it. The program covers conventional fuel, biodiesel or blended biodiesel fuel, and ethanol extended fuel. An auditor would be authorized to issue an order to stop sale upon first violation.

This legislation has the statewide support of the Ohio Farm Bureau and the Ohio Township Association.

The Auditor’s Office receives complaints every year about vehicles shutting down or running poorly after purchasing fuel at Butler County gas stations. During one incident in 2018 roughly 3 feet of water and sediment was mixed in with the fuel in a fuel tank at a Sunoco in West Chester.

It’s been more than 12 years since the state legislature provided the director of agriculture the authority to implement a uniform motor fuel quality testing program in Ohio. The result: In all that time there has not been one quality fuel test conducted in Butler County by the department of agriculture.

With no action toward fuel quality testing by the department of agriculture since HB 67 was codified as ORC 1327.70 in 2007, Reynolds began concentrated efforts in 2018 on new legislation that would grant county auditors the permissive authority to test motor fuel for octane, water and sediment.

Reynolds, Lang and Kelly spoke to the media about HB 499 during a news conference on Monday, Feb. 24. They were joined by co-sponsor Rep. Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton), Ross Township trustee and past president of the Ohio Township Association Tom Willsey, and Reily Township trustee and past president of the Butler County Farm Bureau Nick Schwab.

Below are web links to the media reports that the press conference generated.


