

Fusonie Quoted in *Stateline* Story Titled “Cities, Tribes Try a New Environmental Approach: Give Nature Rights”

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NEWS | 10.30.2019

Tom Fusonie, a partner in the Vorys Columbus office, was quoted in a *Stateline* story titled “Cities, Tribes Try a New Environmental Approach: Give Nature Rights.” In the article, *Stateline*, an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts, highlighted how in 2019 voters in Toledo passed the Lake Erie Bill of Rights and that the measure is being challenged in federal court.

The story states:

“The Lake Erie Bill of Rights, one of a handful of such measures enacted across the country, is being challenged in court. Drewes Farm Partnership, an Ohio business, asserts the measure is unconstitutional and would harm agriculture and other interests in the region. That challenge is currently awaiting a ruling from the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

Some state attorneys general, agricultural interests and business groups say recognizing rights of nature would make businesses and governments vulnerable to lawsuits over almost any action with an impact on the environment. Thomas Fusonie, a lawyer representing one of the plaintiffs in the Lake Erie lawsuit, said the Toledo measure would allow any city resident to sue ‘any business or government within the watershed for really undefined potential violations.’

‘When you’re talking about the right for soil or mosquitoes to naturally evolve, people are going to have different views on what might violate that,’ Fusonie said. ‘You can’t do anything to the land. You can’t farm it, you can’t put new roads in, you can’t do landscaping.’”

To read the entire story, visit the *Stateline* [website](#).