



Tom Cross
Author - *Fishing Ohio*

3/20/18

Energy & Natural Resources Committee
Chairman Al Landis
Ohio House
Columbus, OH 43215

SB257/HB518

Chairman Landis, Natural Resources Committee;

As an Ohio native who has hunted and fished this great state for over 50+ years, and have written much about it. I wholeheartedly support this administration's efforts to reclaim and find new fishermen, old fishermen, and sportsmen and women who have given up on Ohio's fishing and hunting, and also add a layer of protection to Lake Erie fisheries. At least the Ohio Division of Wildlife is trying something new to stem the tide of losing our youth and fellow anglers and hunters who have dropped off the roles of purchasing a sporting license in Ohio.

These are new ideas for sure, some already in practice in other states, but given the benefit of a doubt it might work and only time can tell. But they do deserve a chance as the alternative is losing more and more hunters and fisherpersons, and as we know as numbers shrink so does revenue to the ODOW. This is the alternative to raising license fees.

I particularly like the one year of valid fishing license from date of purchase. I wish ODOW would extend the same to hunting license. During March I usually purchase a fishing license, along with any boat registrations that expired March of that year. Not to mention a new hunting license, which expired Feb. 28, and a \$24 turkey permit, I'm easily out over \$150 before I wet a line. Three year, five year & ten year license might ease the burden too and delay the financial reckoning that comes every spring for Ohio sportsmen and women. And I have to agree with the administration that those that hunt and fish only occasionally, will, if the license in their wallet (or purse) has some time left on it, be more inclined to get outdoors and do something like dunk a worm or shoot a pheasant.

Preserving & protecting Lake Erie fisheries should be of the highest priority for Ohio's Wildlife Division. Requiring non-residents to obtain a stamp in addition to a non-resident fishing license is a good first step and a money generator. Ohio's walleye and steelhead stocks in the spring are fisheries far above average deserving special attention and protection during a time when they are susceptible to over harvest.

Another idea that has value is giving the Chief of Wildlife the discretion to exempt certain individuals or groups from having to purchase a fishing license thereby encouraging special fishing events and accommodating those with special needs or disabled vets that fish from the handicap spots at lakes. This can only pay dividends in the end and open fishing in Ohio to a potentially new audience.

My uncle has advanced COPD, and is in his mid-70's, can't walk 30yards without having to stop to catch his breath. He has hunted all his life. Allowing him to hunt from his gas powered APV on his farm, or the neighbor's farm (with permission) is a change long overdue.

Respectively submitted,

Tom Cross

1497 Cross Rd, Winchester, Oh
cell/text 937.217.1497

Exec. Director Adams County Travel & Visitors Bureau

Author -*Fishing Ohio*, Past President *Outdoor Writers of Ohio*, Former Chairman of *Ohio State Record Fish Program*

tomcross@adamscountytravel.org thomasraycross@gmail.com <https://www.facebook.com/tom.cross.509>

###