

## Boating Associations of Ohio



Chairman Landis, Vice Chair Hagan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today in support of House Bill 518.

My name is Bryan Ralston and I am currently President of the Lake Erie Marine Trades Association (LEMTA) and Executive Director of the Boating Associations of Ohio (BAO). Our associations welcomes boat dealers, marina operators, watercraft manufacturers, clubs, financial entities, and other water-based organizations.

The members of our organizations have reviewed the provisions of HB 518 and believe they offer common sense updates to the fee structure for many licenses administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Of specific interest to LEMTA and BAO is the proposal to implement a 12-month fishing license regardless of when the license was purchased. Currently all fishing license expire at the same time regardless of when they were issued. This makes good sense for Ohio's fishing community.

Our organizations also support the provision to require a Lake Erie stamp for those non-Ohio residents fishing walleye in the lake and its tributaries between January-April. This revenue would go directly to funding Lake Erie initiatives. Lake Erie is without question a crown jewel for Ohio. Our members are committed to partnering with the State and others interested in the preservation of a healthy and vibrant Lake Erie. We view this fishing stamp as a tool to assist in that mission.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for your consideration of this legislation.