



Ohio Ducks Unlimited

Bill Ebert, State Chair
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Tuesday, April 10, 2018

RE: SB 257, Ducks Unlimited Written Testimony

Chairman Balderson and others on the committee,

My name is Bill Ebert from Blanchester, Ohio and I am the State Chairman for Ohio Ducks Unlimited. I also own and operate William J Ebert Trucking LLC.

Ducks Unlimited's mission of conserving wetlands for North America's waterfowl and for people depends on strong partnerships in both the public and private sectors. Here in Ohio, one of DU's most important partners is the Division of Wildlife, whose efforts have helped grow healthy populations of game and non-game species as well as open tens of thousands of acres of public hunting ground for Ohioans to enjoy.

Due to this important conservation partnership formed over many decades, DU wants to ensure that changes to hunting and fishing license fees and structures are done in a manner that fosters financial stability of the Division. The Division of Wildlife is one of the only state agencies that is largely self-funded via license fee revenue and therefore does not rely on significant General Revenue appropriations.

While DU supports many of the provisions included in SB 257 and applauds the bill authors for taking action to increase the Division's flexibility in creating new license packages, we are concerned that the discounts being offered, which range from 12-14%, may ultimately result in a decrease in revenue for wildlife conservation statewide. I have been a business owner for over thirty years. I am acutely aware of while being as competitive as possible, there is a bottom line that has to be achieved.

Therefore, DU recommends that the bill be amended to ensure license discounts do not exceed 5% as recommended by the economic analysis conducted by Southwick Associates.

DU's 16,500 Ohio members depend on a healthy Division of Wildlife that has the capacity to effectively manage game areas, study wildlife populations, enforce wildlife laws, recruit new hunters, and carry-out all the other tasks necessary to preserve out state's rich outdoor heritage.

We ask that the committee amend the bill by reducing the discount to 5% so as to ensure financial stability of the Division of Wildlife, and support professional fish and wildlife management.

Thank you

Bill Ebert
State Chair
Ohio Ducks Unlimited