

Larry Moore testimony before the Ohio Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Members of the committee, I would respectfully ask you to consider these questions. Where is all the support for a bill that should be widely celebrated by those who buy hunting, fishing and trapping licenses? During the press conference on the introduction of these bills, there was an outfitter and a member of the Ohio Bass Chapter Federation on hand in support. During the first hearings it was the same.

In the past, changes in hunting and fishing regulations have been overwhelmingly supported by the sportsmen's community of Ohio. Our members could not wait to come down here, wearing their orange hats to ask for your support in a unified front with ODNR. In the past, the government did not dictate to the customer what we would get. They worked with us to gain our buy-in and support for a proposal.

Sometimes those proposals would be restrictions on things we had previously enjoyed, like lower walleye or perch limits. Sometimes, those proposals would be for new opportunities. But in all cases, the government seemed to really care what those who buy the licenses wanted and worked to gain consensus.

In this case, you have a bill, that is starred for a vote, and perhaps on the fast track to being enacted, that nearly every major sportsmen's organization in Ohio has voiced a concern about. Our concerns are scientifically based, not merely fears. And they stem from our deep commitment to Ohio's natural resources and our enjoyment of hunting, fishing and trapping. How can that not be a concern to you?

There are many things in Senate Bill 257 and House Bill 518 that we can get behind. You've been presented with an alternative, based on the best available data that would enable this bill to be supported both by the government, and Ohio's sportsmen and women who you all serve.

For generations our community has considered itself in partnership with the government to produce quality habitat and quality outdoor experiences. Where we are today does not represent a partnership, but rather an edict. Why not take the advice and wishes of those who year after year engage in this outdoor heritage we enjoy? We can celebrate this legislation as an accomplishment and investment in the future without any hesitation.