

8 April 2019



Representatives of the Ohio Subcommittee on Ag, Development, and Natural Resources:

On behalf of the Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society (RGS/AWS), we are writing to submit testimony in strong support of the Conservation Reinvestment Initiative proposed by Governor DeWine in the 2019 budget.

Currently Ohio is experiencing a precipitous decline in young forest dependent wildlife, including ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and a variety of other game and non-game wildlife which depend on young forest to survive. Ruffed grouse, once an iconic game bird in the state, are at their lowest numbers in Ohio history and on the verge of extirpation. Ohio is not alone in facing these trends, but you are in a position at this point in time to act on this disconcerting decline of healthy forests and wildlife. The Conservation Reinvestment Initiative would provide the Division of Wildlife the means to address these important conservation concerns and other issues important to the sportsmen and women of Ohio. Further, the Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society support the Division of Wildlife gaining the ability and opportunity to adjust license fees for future needs.

Lastly, in a state where forestland is 86% privately owned and public lands are limited, the bond package for AEP lands would provide a significant boost to public recreation opportunities in the state. Recreation, whether involving hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and wildlife watching all support local economies and keep sporting traditions alive and well in Ohio.

The Ruffed Grouse Society urges you to support the Conservation Reinvestment Initiative within the Governor's budget proposal. The future of conservation funding and sporting traditions are in your hands.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heather L. Shaw, M.S.- Wildlife Biologist for the Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society

Brent A. Rudolph, PhD- Chief Conservation and Legislative Officer for the Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society

Benjamin C. Jones, PhD – President and CEO for the Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society

CC: Representatives of the Ohio Subcommittee on Ag, Development, and Natural Resources

RUFFED GROUSE  SOCIETY
Healthy Forests - Abundant Wildlife - Sporting Traditions

National Headquarters

451 McCormick Road • Coraopolis, Pennsylvania 15108-9377
412-262-4044 • Fax 412-262-9207 • Toll Free 888-564-6747 • www.ruffedgrousesociety.org