



*Central Ohio  
Anglers & Hunters  
Club*

P.O. BOX 28224 COLUMBUS, OHIO 43228

Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development  
and Natural Resources

April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Proponent Testimony  
Conservation Reinvestment Initiative

Chairman Hoops, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matt Misicka. I am the President of the Ohio Conservation Federation and a Past-President of the Central Ohio Anglers and Hunters Club (COAHC). Today, I am offering proponent testimony for the Conservation Reinvestment Initiative on behalf of the Central Ohio Anglers and Hunters Club. COAHC is a family-oriented conservation club located in West Jefferson. Our 300 members include hunters, anglers and recreational shooters. Our club owns property in Madison, Knox, and Gallia counties. Our membership primarily hails from Franklin, Madison, Delaware, Union, and Knox counties, and a few other outlying spots.

Approaching nearly two decades since the last fee increase, the service provided by the Division of Wildlife (DOW) has diminished. At risk are our relationships with conservation-trained professionals, fish-filled waters, and access to public hunting. Ohio's hunters and anglers expect value from their licenses and permit fees and our members overwhelmingly embrace a modest increase.

On Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, our officers, directors and past-presidents voted unanimously to support the Conservation Reinvestment Initiative.

Our club relies upon collaboration with and funding from the Division of Wildlife to carry out our many family, youth, and veterans-oriented programs. Each year, we work closely with DOW to deliver publicly-available family fishing, summer-long youth archery, junior rifle, and steel challenge programs. Our hunter education courses serve as an opportunity to recruit youth for our youth deer and turkey hunts each fall and spring. And, our most successful programs feature our award-winning competitive traveling scholastic youth trapshooting team and our annual Disabled Veteran's Hunt. None of these would likely occur if not for guidance and assistance from the Division of Wildlife.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated Wildlife Officer in Madison County. Today, not every county can say that. Without a strong, competent, and complete set of 88 Wildlife Officers,

Investigators, Supervisors and District staff the sportsmen and women of this state are at a disadvantage and not getting the full value of their now diminished license fees.

The month of April signifies the start of spring in Ohio and the start of fishing season. Anglers, from all over the state, young and old, look forward to the DOW's annual fish stockings. More than 60 ponds, lakes and reservoirs are stocked, including Adams Lake (Adams), Delta Reservoir (Fulton), Timbre Ridge and Lake Vesuvius (Lawrence), Olander Lake, Pearson Metro Parks, and Swanton Reservoir (Lucas), Quarry Park (Marion), Turkey Creek Lake (Scioto), and McKarns Lake (Williams) receive state-raised trout each year. Local residents and visitors alike benefit from these put-and-take stockings. Hatcheries, boat ramps, and fishing access in disrepair or in need of modernization result in fewer fish available for stocking and fewer successful days of fishing.

Hunters, anglers, trappers, hikers, campers, horseback riders, mountain bikers and many, many others cringe at the prospect of permanently losing access to the AEP ReCreation Lands. The 60,000 acres that have been managed cooperatively by ODNR and AEP for the last 50 years represent 10% of all the publicly available hunting lands in Ohio. Losing this nearly contiguous piece of recreational land would be a set-back that Ohio's sportsmen and women would likely never recover from. We especially appreciate Governor DeWine's commitment to fund the acquisition of these vitally important lands.

Programs aimed at recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters and anglers, conserving tracts of public lands for future generations, access to fishing and boat ramps, and the stocking of fish in ponds and lakes results in more than just a tug on the line or the sizzle in a skillet. This re-investment in conservation through the DOW is indeed an investment in the future. More and better opportunities mean more anglers, hunters and trappers, a strengthened outdoors economy, and an overall increase in the well-being of Ohio's citizens.

The Central Ohio Anglers and Hunters Club encourages the committee to support the Conservation Reinvestment Initiative.

If I can answer any questions or be of any service, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

*Matt Misicka*

Matt Misicka  
Past-President, Central Ohio Anglers and Hunters Club  
President, Ohio Conservation Federation  
[mattmisicka@gmail.com](mailto:mattmisicka@gmail.com)  
(614) 581-9283