

**Jewett Sportsman's Club**

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5/19/2015

**Attention:** The Honorable Senator Joe Uecker, Chair, Finance – Corrections Subcommittee:

**Subject:** House Bill 64 – Main Operating Budget FY2016-FY2017

As a Sportsman's Club, The Jewett Sportsmen and Farmers, Inc. (JSC) supports the reasonable fee increase as proposed by the ODNR Division of Wildlife and contained in House Bill 64.

The JSC acknowledges that the quality of the deer herd in Ohio attracts thousands of out-of-state deer hunters to our great state. The non-resident hunting license fee in Ohio is currently near the bottom and is especially low for states that are considered as prime hunting destinations. The proposed increase will place Ohio in the midrange of state non-resident license fees. Ohio will still remain well below the average non-resident cost of other high-quality destination states with this proposed rate increase. This will allow Ohio to remain a solid value for the non-resident deer hunter.

The JSC recognizes the importance of a well-funded ODNR Division of Wildlife. The Division is self-funded by sportsmen and women through the sale of licenses, permits and fees on commercial wildlife related operations. All states pay 100% up front and then the Division receives 75% federal reimbursement from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for eligible project expenditures through the Pittman-Robertson (PR) and Dingell-Johnson (DJ) programs.

The amount of federal dollars the Division receives depends upon the number of hunting and fishing licenses sold and the ability to provide matching funds. PR funding has dramatically increased over the last five years due to increased sales of firearms and ammunition. The most recent projection from the USFWS shows another potential fifty-percent increase. With the increases to PR it has been hard to match down those funds, and if the states are unable to match down the funds those dollars revert back to the USFWS and are not available to them for wildlife restoration.

Hunting and shooting sports are extremely popular in Ohio. The shooters are paying the PR federal excise taxes. The public ranges operated by the Division of Wildlife attract thousands of shooters annually. The Division of Wildlife is committed to improving the existing shooting ranges plus seeking opportunities to provide new ranges. Ohio shooters need and deserve affordable safe public ranges for recreational

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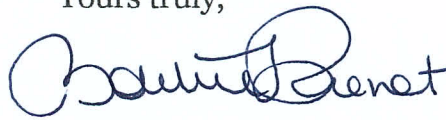
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shooting. The JSC strongly supports the mission of the Division of Wildlife to provide improved ranges and increased access.

The fee increase contained within House Bill 64 is critical to the Division's ability to provide matching money for the federal PR projects, including range development. Without this increase the federal money and an opportunity to serve Ohio's gun owners may forever be lost.

For these reasons, the Jewett Sportsman's Club urges the Ohio Senate to ensure the fee increase language remains in House Bill 64.

Yours truly,



Bobbie Prevot, Secretary

cc: Senate President Keith Faber  
Senator Chris Widener, Senate President Pro Tem  
Senator Scott Oeslager, Chair, Finance Committee  
James Zehringer, Director Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Scott Zody, Chief ODNR Division of Wildlife

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