



Honorable State Senators and Representatives:

I am testifying today in support of HB 518 and SB 257 and asking for you to allow the Ohio Department of Natural Resource to be able to take their licensing process to the level that other states have already climbed to. Ohio is a state that has some of the best walleye and smallmouth bass fishing in the nation. The whitetail deer hunting in Ohio in terms of trophy status is in the Top 5 in the nation. However the license fees charged to non-resident sportsman do not reflect this. Of the five neighboring states two have lower non-resident fees for anglers fishing with Michigan being the highest at \$76.00. Ohio has trophy class walleye and smallmouth bass fishing at Lake Erie and the number of out of state license plates there in April and May prove that. With regards to hunting license fees all but Kentucky are lower. Kentucky is the same as ours. But this is just for the basic hunting license. When you start adding deer permits to the license all the neighboring states are higher. I have encountered hunters from all over the nation who come to Ohio to deer hunt due to the quality of our animals and some pay outfitters up to \$2000 a week just to hunt.

I have been blessed to have hunted and fished in over 30 states and two foreign countries. When I first started purchasing out of state licenses I was amazed that some states offered multi-year and lifetime license packages to their residents. I often wondered why Ohio not did do this. In July 2017, I was asked to meet with Chief Mike Miller and other executives of the ODNR in Columbus. I was asked what I thought about raising certain non-resident license fees and multi-year/lifetime licenses. The first words out of my mouth were "It's about time".

In closing I ask you to pass these bills from committee to allow the House and Senate to vote on them. Ohio is behind the times in regards to licensing the sportsman of this state and country. The Ohio residents who are purchasing licenses to fish and hunt will benefit from the structuring of the multi-year and lifetime license. Thank you

Stephen Coulter
President, Ohio Bass Federation