Written Testimony from Hope Taft [ ohiohoper@yahoo.com]

In favor of April- Ohio Native Plant Month

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Senator Hoagland and members of the committee:

Thank you for taking up this measure [HB 59 and SB 45] again so quickly.

As simple as its contents sound, it can have a profound impact on the vegetation in the state.

As I drive the highways of Ohio and look out the window this time of year, it is hard to see anything other than invasive plants. The Amur honeysuckle and Russian olive bushes are in full bloom. The Calgary pear has just finished it showy display. Garlic Mustard is in its last days getting ready to scatter its prolific number of seeds and the lesser celandine is beginning to disappear leaving muddy bear spots in its wake.

This bill would encourage people to learn more about the harmful effect of these and other invasive plants, to help us eradicate them and use native Ohio plants in their place. Most non-native plants do not give any nutritional value to pollinators, some actually make birds and insects sick.

This bill will give the professional, the garden club member, and the concerned citizen a reason to provide native plants, host eradication events, give speeches and think of creative ways to get the message out. Ohio is on the verge of losing its botanic heritage. Non-Native invasive plants are making this state look like any other. We need to work hard to preserve and restore what we have inherited so native pollinators will continue to have the plants to help them survive and do their job of providing food for us humans.

Please pass this bill out of committee and get it to the Governor’s desk as soon as possible so we can begin the big task of organizing the first Native Plant Month for April 2020.

I have already received a speaking engagement for April 2020 on Plants That Work and Plants That Hurt.

I am sorry I cannot be with you in person today. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.