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Written Testimony from Hope Taft, in favor of the ODNR budget Senate General Government
an Agency Review Committee
May 2019

Dear Committee Chairman Schuring and committee members,

I want to add my support to the many others you have received for the ODNR budget for the next two years.

While Bob and I lived in The Governors Residence, I created the Heritage Garden that highlights the wide variety of Native Plants in Ohio and the positive benefits of using them. It is arranged in a way that corresponds to Ohio 's natural areas and preserves. I was fortunate enough to be able to visit many of these special places. Since moving to Greene County, I have become very involved in the Scenic River program and now realize how important clean water is and the corridors that protect our streams and rivers are.

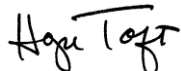
All nature works together to create the environments that support human life. We tend to take this fact for granted, but as we destroy nature, we are destroying ourselves. We cannot live without food, clean water, and clean air. The environment gives us all these and much more.

In the future, Ohio will have its abundant water supplies as a main asset, but only if they are not polluted. Plants and wildlife will be looking for new places to call home. Our river systems add longitudinal preserved lands to the many natural areas we have designated in the state. While nice, wildlife has limited geographical movement if the river corridors are not available to them. Free movement to new locations will be important when we all look for new niches that support our lives.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources is primed to take care of our preserved spaces, add to them and work to clean our water supplies in a coordinated fashion. By creating a division of Natural Areas and Preserves that includes the Scenic River program, and the H2Ohio plan, we can all sleep better at night knowing that someone is looking out for the state's best natural assets, working to remove invasive species, and enhancing our chances for a better life now and in the future.

The details of their proposal are before you. I hope you will support them to the fullest and give us all, humans and wildlife alike, the best chance possible to survive long into the future.

Sincerely,



Hope Taft

Co chair, Co founder – Little Miami River Kleeners, Little Miami Watershed Network