

May 15, 2019

Mr./Mrs. Chairman & Committee Members:

My name is Keith Jones and I am the current Region B Director of the Ohio State Trapper's Association. This organization has been around for over 75 years and our membership is approximately 2000. Prior to becoming the Region B Director I served as District 14 Director for the OSTA working with Muskingum, Guernsey, Belmont, Noble, Monroe, Morgan and Washington Counties. This eventually lead me to serving as a volunteer to 25 Counties in Region B.

My involvement with the Ohio Division of Wildlife started with taking the training to become a certified Trapping and Hunter Instructor for Ohio. OSTA has helped the Ohio Division of Wildlife with the Advanced Trapper Workshops, the Trapping Academy, the Fur Biologist studies in muskrats, grey fox and bobcat. It's an honor and pleasure to work with the Division of Wildlife on nuisance control, NASP programs in Archery, the Passport to Fishing Program and the State Fairs.

In my professional life I am a minister to a church of 350, drive a school bus for the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District and I am currently the President of Broken Timber Outdoor Education Center in Hannibal, Ohio.

Our Wildlife officers work with the 4-H clubs, the OSTA Region Meets and Conventions, our schools, parks, fairs, festivals, the general public and churches. I see our Wildlife Officers loving their jobs and working to maintain safety and wildlife management. I also saw when our former Governor eliminated the overtime for our officers and added the burdensome reporting requirements.

The County Wildlife Officers are the men and women in the field. They are the backbone and hands on of the Ohio Division of Wildlife. When the hunters, trappers and fishermen and women enjoy the privileges of the great outdoors, the Division of Wildlife Officers are who they look to and depend on.

Currently because of funding problems the Division is short 14 officers in the field. This should not be. Every County in Ohio should have a wildlife officer who commits his or herself to this responsibility. The budget should allow Ohio to have current officers in all 88 Counties and the Lake Erie Districts. This cannot happen without the funding! When my family and yours buy trapping, hunting and fishing license, we are volunteering to pay for the creation of habitat and the management of all wildlife. This is a benefit to all of Ohio, not just us and we gladly do it.

My father taught me the importance of God's creation and that we all have to do our job in protecting and regulating the trapping, hunting and fishing seasons. I don't want my 10 grandchildren to miss out on the opportunity to enjoy this Great Heritage.

Last Friday, May 10, 2019, we honored a great man in our church, Alan Hamilton. Alan served the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for 25 years as a Wildlife Investigator and a facilities Manager at the Wilds in Cumberland, Ohio. Alan and his wife Kathy devoted a big part of their life to the Division of Wildlife. He was a great Wildlife Officer and we need Officers like Mr. Hamilton in all 88 Counties and Lake Erie.

Thank you for your time.