Danny Donoghue Testimony

Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee

May 15th, 2019

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am Danny Donoghue. I live in Mahoning County. I’m also an officer with the Mahoning County Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs and for the Mahoning County Duck Hunters. I’m here today on behalf of sportsmen to ask this committee to pass the items in the budget that will improve habitat and hunting, fishing and trapping quality.

I know it must sound funny to have us come down here and ask you to increase license fees. I’m sure you don’t get that kind of request every day from taxpayers. But when it comes to Ohio sportsmen, we’ve been paying our own way for a really long time because we know that it takes an investment like this to maintain and improve the habitat it takes to produce healthy fish and wildlife, including the kind we hunt for each year. No matter what kind of sportsman or woman you are, without good habitat, good hunting and fishing is not going to be there.

The money we pay in license and permits pays for forest management that supports game like deer, turkey and grouse. It pays for upland habitat management that is good for pheasant, and mourning doves. It pays for lake management that supports small mouth, walleye and perch. And it pays to secure places for the public to hunt.

The Division of Wildlife has been able to take care of this work for my entire life. But in recent years, a lack of funding has forced tough choices that is diminishing habitat in this state. When habitat declines, hunting and fishing participation goes with it. People love to see wildlife. They love to feel their fishing line tug when they get a bite. Even when we don’t kill a deer or catch a fish, knowing they’re there makes our pulse race, and makes us keep buying a license each year.

Normally license fees have increased about every ten years. Keeping that pace allowed there to be funding to maintain good habitat for game and non-game alike. But somewhere along the line this system got sidetracked, and its already been 16 years since we made an investment in funding fish and wildlife habitat. And that’s what’s made us all make the long trip from northeast Ohio down here. We need your help. We’re willing to pay the bills. But we need your help to do it.

Thank you.