



**Representative Lisa Sobecki
House District 45**

**House Bill 484 Designate Walleye as State Fish Testimony
February 15, 2022**

Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Creech, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the Ohio House Agriculture and Conversation Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony with my joint sponsor Rep. Mike Sheehy.

As Rep. Sheehy mentioned, the Lake Erie Walleye is an easily recognizable fish and it is also important to Ohio's economy. Lake Erie is the smallest of the 5 great lakes, and contains 2% of total water that make up the Great Lakes. However roughly 50% of the fish found throughout all of the Great Lakes call Lake Erie home. Stone Lab at Ohio State University has ranked Lake Erie among the most valuable freshwater commercial fisheries in the world.¹ Among those the types of fish sought after in Lake Erie, Walleye. According to the Ohio Division of Wildlife, there are 95 million walleye in Lake Erie at least 2 years or older, ready to be caught and kept.²

Lake Erie's sport fishing and associated expenditures is \$1 billion a year. The impact is widespread across many different facets of the economy. The number one target for sport fishers: Walleye³. In comparison, Ohio's State Mammal is the White-Tailed Deer. There are roughly 600,000 White-Tailed Deer across Ohio.⁴ There are roughly 158 times more walleye in Lake Erie than there are deer in Ohio. Walleye can be also found in the Ohio River and Ohioans from across the state travel to the Lake Erie coast hoping to catch Walleye.

Designating Walleye as the State Fish makes sense because as we have demonstrated, it is an important part of Ohio's society and economy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony. We are more than happy to answer any questions from the committee.

¹ <https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2021/11/walleye-lake-erie-population-ohio-economy/>. Visited 2/11/2022.

² <https://www.fishlsc.com/walleye-facts>. Visited 2/11/2022.

³ <https://ofbf.org/2017/06/29/fishing-big-business-ohios-great-lake/> Visited 2/11/2022.

⁴ <https://www.ohiosos.gov/profile-ohio/things/symbols-of-ohio/> Visited 2/11/2022.