

**Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee**  
**Testimony in Support of ODNR Budget**  
**Provided by Amber Fagan, President & CEO, Indian Lake Area Chamber of Commerce**  
**May 3, 2023**

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Good morning, Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. My name is Amber Fagan, and I am the President & CEO of the Indian Lake Area Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of ODNR's budget.

I was born and raised at Indian Lake. I went Indian Lake Schools and some of my first memories as a child are of me on the water with my parents in their pontoon boat. I enjoyed tubing and learned how to water ski, and now, I have twin boys with one on the Bowling Green water ski team. Three generations of my family currently live on the lake, and clearly it holds a special place in my heart.

Over the past several years Indian Lake has suffered from a severe weed infestation, and it has truly had a devastating impact on the local economy. Many boaters couldn't get through the abundance weeds, and simply left to boat elsewhere. House went up for sale, many dock owners endured extra costs to manage weeds, and restaurants and businesses were forced to close. There are 15-20 businesses that sit on Indian Lake, and they had to personally invest in weed vegetation management tools to make sure boaters could access their docks. We had a significant loss of travel and tourism.

Last year, the ODNR with the help of the General Assembly took action and provided Indian Lake with the funding and tools it needed to combat this weed infestation. We have made tremendous efforts, but we can't stop now, and the scientists say this will be a multi-year effort. We don't want to lose Indian lake, it is a critical player to our region's economic development.

That being said, I respectfully request that ODNR's funding be restored to the levels from the Governor's as introduced version of the budget. It is vital that ODNR has the necessary funding to ensure our parks are safe, maintained, and available for all Ohioans to enjoy. Funding for Indian Lake vegetation management was cut for FY24-25, and it is critical that we continue to address this weed problem. Our community depends on it.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify about ODNR's budget. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.