



Board of Commissioners

117 East Columbus Avenue
Suite 100 • Bellefontaine, Oh 43311
commissioners@logancountyohio.gov
(office) 937-599-7283 • (fax) 937-599-7268

Joe M. Antram • Mark A. Robinson • Michael E. Yoder

David Henry, County Administrator
david.henry@logancountyohio.gov
937-292-4008

DeDe Doss, Clerk Administrator
ddoss@logancountyohio.gov
937-599-7284

Jenny Richardson, Human Resources Director
jrichardson@logancountyohio.gov
937-599-7280

**Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Testimony in Support of ODNR Budget
Provided by Joe Antram, Logan County Commissioner
May 3, 2023**

Good morning, Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and the members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. I am Joe Antram, the current President of the Logan County Board of Commissioners. I was born and raised in Logan County and my wife and I live on our family farm, which was recognized as a Century Farm by the Ohio Department of Agriculture in 2020. It is located just southwest of Indian Lake. Five generations of our family have enjoyed swimming, fishing and boating there and it is where I learned to swim and water ski as a child. However, in the last few years, there has been far less swimming and virtually no water skiing at Indian Lake due to the weed growth that has invaded its waters.

The Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Lake Watershed Project, the Indian Lake Community Development Corporation, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Logan County Board of Commissioners and a host of other entities together embody the passion and spirit of the community as we've invested funding and energy toward solving what has become known as "The Weed Problem".

Not long ago, we all were able to boat from one side of the lake to the other without obstruction. Now, depending upon location and season, we've found it challenging to navigate more than 100 yards or so without needing to stop to clean vegetation off the propeller. Water enthusiasts have found it impossible to ride jet skis and jet boats without immediate clogging. As I network with people from all over the state, I am increasingly alarmed by the comments from people that describe Indian Lake as ruined, dangerous and as a place to avoid. It is heartbreaking to hear people speak so negatively of a place that was once The Million Dollar Playground with booming real estate opportunities.

While we appreciate the efforts of Representative Jon Cross and Senate President Matt Huffman to attain prior funding that has been used for invasive weed study and remediation, the situation has not yet been solved and further investments must be made to guarantee navigational improvements at Indian Lake. The current House reductions of the proposed ODNR budget includes the elimination of \$1 million each year under the Special Projects line for vegetation management at Indian Lake. I believe that this would bring our progress to a complete standstill and be catastrophic for our community.

Although the House has proposed \$125,000 to help fund efforts of the Indian Lake Watershed Project as they continue to assist in the management of the lake's ecosystem, that is the only funding currently proposed and is

exceedingly deficient as we look toward eradicating the Eurasian Watermilfoil and Coontail infestations that are congesting Indian Lake. It is my hope that my testimony today will encourage the restoration of the proposed \$1 million for each of FY24 and FY25 to support programs that will aid in the recovery of the Indian Lake ecosystem and reestablish conditions that are conducive to recreation and economic investment.

Thank you for your devotion to the health and welfare of our citizens and natural resources that make Logan County and the entire state of Ohio so very special.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe M. Antram". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Joe Antram, President
Logan County Board of Commissioners