

Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
Testimony in Support of ODNR Budget
Provided by Raymond Bohac, Owner, Cranberry Resort, Indian Lake
May 3, 2023

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I am Raymond Bohac, Owner of Cranberry Resort. We are a waterfront restaurant on Indian Lake with over 45 docks. Cranberry Resort has operated since 1947 and I have had the privilege of being an owner for the past four years. During covid my business partner passed away unexpectedly, so my wife and I are now the sole owners.

I am urgently requesting that the Ohio Division of Natural Resources funding be restored to the levels from the Governor's as introduced version of the budget.

At Cranberry Resort, we are deeply committed to providing our guests with a memorable experience and supporting the local economy. Our operation relies heavily on the allure of Indian Lake and its recreational opportunities. Throughout the year, we employ a dedicated staff of up to 70 individuals, including many college students during the summer months. We take pride in being able to offer higher wages to our employees despite facing the same supply cost increases as the rest of the industry. We also engage with local schools in programs to help teach kids the restaurant trade.

Unfortunately, our efforts to deliver exceptional service and support the livelihoods of our staff have been severely hindered by the relentless invasion of weeds in Indian Lake.

During the peak season, a large portion of the lake becomes unnavigable, causing significant challenges for our guests and the wider community. Jet skis and boats with impeller drives become clogged, leading to frustrating breakdowns and safety concerns. Even outboard motors suffer from overheating due to the cooling intakes becoming clogged. This not only tarnishes the experience for boaters but also puts a strain on the already limited revenue-generating window for businesses like ours.

We have a short summer window to make our revenue for the year. Typically, in the summer months our docks are full on the weekends. Last year there were peak summer days where $\frac{3}{4}$ of the docks remained opened. The included charts show our 2021 vs 2022 revenue and separately the profit/loss per month. Restaurant costs and therefore pricing is up do to national market factors. As a result, that alone should reflect a year-over-year increase in sales. However, you can see a year-over-year drop in sales resulting in weaker EBITDA in our peak months. This is not sustainable, and to my knowledge there is not direct funding available to aid in offsetting this.

Significant harm has already been inflicted upon the social fabric of Indian Lake. A simple Google search of Indian Lake reveals an alarming sight: mowing lines cutting across what should be pristine bodies of water, now overrun by invasive vegetation (See included image). This unsettling visual has given rise to rumors and misconceptions beyond the confines of

Indian Lake, leading to a growing reluctance among people to visit and enjoy the lake's offerings. Consequently, the lake is being shunned, and its true potential remains untapped.

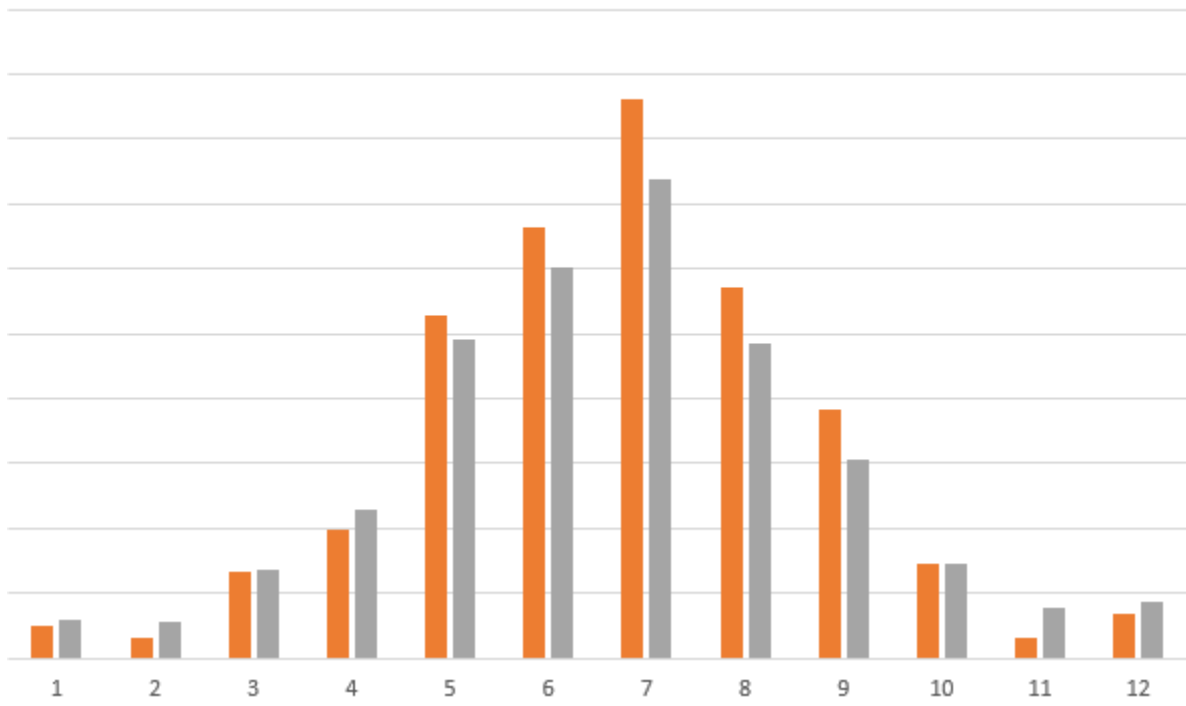
We believe that a comprehensive maintenance program, in conjunction with the eradication efforts, is vital to mitigating the negative consequences of weed infestation. Last year alone we spent an unbudgeted amount of around \$30,000 to incorporating dock clean-up and measures to prevent weed clippings from accumulating. This may sound like a small amount, but for a small restaurant this can be devastating.

Thankfully ODNR has been taking action. Outside scientists and experts have been engaged to work toward a comprehensive plan to ensure this. Weeds do not wait for budget cycles. We are already behind and cannot afford anything less than being aggressive and mitigating this. The State of Ohio has invested in our parks and lakes. It would be a shame to see those investments go to waste.

Our plea is not just for our own business but for the entire Indian Lake community. We humbly request your commitment to allocating additional budgetary resources to combat the invasive weed infestation and establish a comprehensive maintenance program for Indian Lake. By investing in eradicating the invasive weed and implementing effective maintenance measures, we can restore the lake to its former splendor, revitalize the recreational experience for residents and visitors alike, and reignite the economic prosperity of our community.

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.

Sales By Month



Profit/Loss by Month

