



League of Ohio Sportsmen

Established 1908

**Proponent Testimony, Am.HB 33
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Jay Peterson, President, League of Ohio Sportsmen
May 10, 2023**

Chairman Schaffer, members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify. My name is Jay Peterson, and I am the President of the League of Ohio Sportsmen, one of Ohio's oldest conservation organizations. For 115 years our members have worked to be stewards of our natural resources as we enjoy the beauty of our great state through hunting, camping, boating, fishing, and more. Our organization partners with the Division of Wildlife in these efforts. We support the Department of Natural Resources general revenue fund amount that was in the executive version of the bill. We also support the continuation of the H2Ohio fund and other proposed changes benefitting the Division of Wildlife within Am.HB 33.

H2Ohio continues to be a vehicle bringing all stakeholders to the table, including farmers, agribusiness, local governments, and conservationists, working together to find long-term, science-based solutions. H2Ohio's management practices are key in helping farmers keep nutrients in the soil. These management practices, which include cover crops, buffer strips, and using farm implements equipped with precision technology, are not only helping the Western Lake Erie Basin but are also working statewide. These practices, particularly cover crops and buffer strips, create wildlife habitats while helping to curb nutrient runoff thus protecting the health of waterways throughout the state.

The League of Ohio Sportsmen would also like to express our support for the items included in the Division of Wildlife's general revenue fund, including funding for Project WILD. Project WILD is a wildlife-based conservation and environmental education for youth. The Project WILD and Aquatic WILD programs generate youth participation in outdoor activities. These supplementary education programs reach over 2,000 educators annually and emphasize an awareness, and appreciation of wildlife and natural resources. Getting children outside to use parks and wildlife areas could not be more important. Parks and wildlife areas provide a place for all citizens to enjoy Ohio's natural resources.

On behalf of The League of Ohio Sportsmen, I would lastly like to express support for funding for habitat conservation. Ninety-five percent of Ohio is privately owned, making public access to natural resources that much more important. Wildlife areas provide outdoor opportunities

throughout the state which are free and accessible to all Ohioans. Wildlife areas provide places to explore, educate, and recreate.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your time. I would be happy to entertain questions from the committee.