

**To:** Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members O'Brien and Wilkin of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

**From:** Matt Misicka, Executive Director  
Ohio Conservation Federation

**Date:** 13 November 2023



**Re: Proponent Testimony for Proposed Changes to the Scenic River Laws (Sub S.B. 156)**

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members O'Brien and Wilkin, on behalf of the Ohio Conservation Federation and the thousands of Ohio sportsmen and women we represent, ***I am writing today to voice our strongest support for the proposed changes to Ohio's Scenic River Law.***

Ohio's 800 miles of wild, scenic, and recreational rivers provide Ohio's hunters, anglers, trappers, boaters, birdwatchers, and nature lovers the access and opportunity to pursue our uniquely American outdoor heritage. Research by numerous sources, including Southwick Associates, Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation, American Sportfishing Association, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, The Ohio State University, and others, suggests that Ohio's outdoor economy accounts for more than \$8.1B in overall economic activity and employs more than 132K Ohio workers. As part of that, Ohio's 677K anglers and 320K hunters contribute \$3B in total economic impact across the State of Ohio. Thriving wild, scenic, and recreational rivers are vital to Ohio's outdoor economy.

Sub S.B. 156 provides several changes to the Ohio Scenic River Law that enhance the program's ability to serve the citizens of Ohio, including:

- (1) eliminating confusing language referring to the creation of a 1000-foot "wild, scenic, or recreational river area" that will provide increased clarity to riverfront landowners that their private property rights will not be impacted by designation of a wild, scenic, or recreational river, and*
- (2) increasing the public comment period from 30 to 60 days after the issuance of the Department's Intent to Designate by the Director, and*
- (3) returning the pertinent Scenic River Ohio Revised Code back into the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves section of code.*

Thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony for Sub S.B. 156. Ohio's sportsmen and women encourage you to take the recommendations of the hunting, angling, and trapping community into consideration during your deliberations and pass the proposed changes.

If I can be of any further assistance or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

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