



Sustaining and Advancing Ohio's Forest Products Industry

November 15, 2024

Chair Tim Schaffer
Senate Agriculture Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chair Schaffer,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding HB 503, which addresses the growing threat of feral swine in southern Ohio where 60% of Ohio's forest resource is located. The Ohio Forestry Association (OFA) joins the many other Ohio agriculture organizations who support HB 503 to prevent population growth and spread of these invasive animals.

A key component of forest management is controlling invasives. Invasives out-compete native species due to less pressure from diseases and predators. If not controlled through management practices, they can take over a previously healthy area. Feral hogs are an invasive species that are destroying native habitat, which can upset the balance of the forest ecosystem. These animals are destroying the landscape and damaging private and public woodlands.

While OFA is very supportive of Ohio's sportsmen and hunting rights, we recognize that legal hunting seasons for feral hogs has contributed to population explosion in other states. This is something OFA is anxious to avoid, and we support removing an incentive to import and release feral hogs. Ohio has been fortunate so far and has not experienced rapid population growth, so it is important that we act quickly to avoid situations like Tennessee and Texas face.

Sincerely,

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