

May 3, 2023

Ohio Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources committee

House Bill 33, FY 2024-2025

Dear committee,

I am a contributing writer for the Ohio Outdoor News, the Communications Coordinator for New Lexington Schools, an avid angler and hunter as well as a lifetime resident of Southeast Ohio. Recently it has come to my attention that you are considering a reduction in funding for House Bill 33 in FY 2024-2025.

Our former and current governors took dramatic action to acquire the property formerly known as the AEP ReCreation Lands. Gov. Kasich began the process that Gov. DeWine continued until all of this property was secured . The foresight of these two public servants will benefit Ohio citizens tremendously in the years to come. This action has already created a positive response all across Southeast Ohio.

To scale back this progress is a classic shortsighted mistake in judgment that citizens of Southeast Ohio recognize all too well. But Appalachia Hills Wildlife Area and Jesse Owens State Park impact many more people than just those of us residing in Morgan and the surrounding counties.

The economic support and employment opportunities that can come with the proposed improvements are critical to our area. So is the preservation of a way of life so dear to all of us who love the outdoors. Gov. Kasich and Gov. DeWine recognized this potential as well as the importance of such a unique resource. My hope is that you will fully support the ODNR plans and budget requests in House Bill 33 for FY 2024-2025. Please allow Southeast Ohio to become a priority.

When debating what this project will cost, consider the price Southeast Ohio will pay if you fail to match the vision of John Kasich and Mike DeWine.

Sincerely,

Doug Clifford