

Dear Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

It is my pleasure to write to you today in reference to House Bill 33, and how this funding could positively impact our community as it pertains to the Jesse Owens State Park in Morgan County.

As a current educator and former school counselor, I always encourage students to find adventure and explore their surroundings, especially in nature. I have seen first hand how the Jesse Owens State Park in Morgan County has helped create not only knowledge about wildlife and nature, but also memorable moments that will last a lifetime. From whole-school field trips, to the “Hooked on Fishing” program, this state park is a wonderful, local resource for our students and their families to enjoy and learn from.

While I am thrilled with the capital improvements that ODNR has set to make, such as construction of cabins, a retail shop and visitor center, I believe that the additional funding that ODNR is requesting will have an even greater impact on our community and the entire Southeastern Ohio region. As it stands, this state park has been an amazing opportunity and resource for our local community. With additional funds, ODNR would be able to hire groundskeepers, additional law enforcement, and naturalist(s) to ensure that the Jesse Owens State Park would continue to flourish and provide meaningful experiences to its visitors.

In addition to the impact of knowledge that this funding would have on our region, I believe it would also greatly benefit our local businesses and the economic stability of Morgan county and the surrounding areas. As improvements and opportunities increase at this state park, as will tourism. This will create an influx of direct and indirect spending in not only Morgan county, but surrounding areas as well.

I urge you to strongly consider granting this additional funding to help support ODNR’s additional improvements to the Jesse Owens State Park in Morgan County. Our region needs this, our community needs this, our school needs this, but perhaps most importantly, our kids need this.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kelsey Armstrong

4th Grade Science and ELA teacher at Morgan Local Schools

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