



8 May 2023

Ohio Senate
Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

REF: House Bill 33

Dear members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing on behalf of The Wilds to show our support of the requested capital improvement monies from House Bill 33 (FY 2024-2025) for valued funding for improvements at the Jesse Owens State Park in Morgan County. Project funding would assist with construction of cabins, new campsites, a visitor center, and retail shop, along with additional park expenses to include acquiring staff for operation.

The visitor footprint through Morgan County, which adjoins Muskingum County, the location of The Wilds, is beneficial to many local businesses and organizations. We believe that ODNR and Jesse Owens State Park is a valued partner and a tremendous asset to the community and will assist in bringing greater economic growth and development to the somewhat challenged Appalachian region of Southeast Ohio.

Providing additional outdoor recreational venues and activities is important to the local community. As collaborative partners with ODNR, growing the number of visitors in our area is instrumental in furthering our mission to empower people and save wildlife. Our collaborative impact to the local and state economies continues to increase and funding support for this project will further both of our missions to connect people with the outdoors and with wildlife.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Smith, DVM
Vice President – The Wilds

JAS/jag

cc: Shannon Wells, Director – Morgan County Economic Development