

Proponent testimony: walleye being named Ohio's Official State Fish

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony in support of the walleye being named Ohio's official state fish. My name is Lance Woodworth, President & CEO of Destination Toledo.

The Walleye is more than just a fish in Ohio, it's a year-round tradition, an economic driver, and a symbol of who we are. Each spring, anglers from across the country travel to the Maumee and Sandusky Rivers for the legendary Walleye Run. In summer and fall, Lake Erie delivers world-class sportfishing. Families across the state chase Walleye in inland lakes, and in winter, ice fishing keeps the tradition alive. From riverbanks to reservoirs to frozen lakes, the Walleye connects Ohioans across all seasons.

Other states like Minnesota and South Dakota have already named the Walleye their state fish. But no place can match Ohio. Lake Erie is truly the "Walleye Capital of the World," producing unmatched size and quantity, attracting global anglers, and supporting thousands of jobs.

Naming the Walleye Ohio's official state fish honors both our heritage and our future. It celebrates an outdoor tradition that unites families, fuels local economies, and showcases something uniquely ours. I respectfully urge your support.