



September 30, 2025

Chair Miller, Vice Chair Hiner, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee, I am writing to encourage your support of HB 312 which would designate the walleye as the official state fish.

Ohio is widely recognized as the “Walleye Capital of the World,” a title embraced by both Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jim Tressel. Not surprising due to the fact that Lake Erie is home to an estimated 72.1 million walleye, compared to roughly 600,000 white-tailed deer statewide. Plus, walleye play a key role in Ohio’s portion of Lake Erie’s sport fishing industry, which generates \$1.19 billion in economic output annually.

The walleye is deeply embedded in Ohio’s outdoor culture, featuring fishing tournaments and attracting tourism along Lake Erie. Designating the walleye as the state fish emphasizes its ecological importance, supports conservation efforts, and underscores Lake Erie’s significance to Ohio’s economy.

ConnectToledo supports downtown Toledo redevelopment and realizes that the attractions of sportfishing is key to people visiting our area and hopefully from that exposure, wanting to call Toledo or Northwest Ohio home. Our home hockey team, the Walleye, brings the species to top of mind for visitors and residents alike, and we support this bipartisan effort with nearly 50 co-sponsors.

Ohio has official symbols like the white trillium (state wildflower) and tomato juice (state beverage), but it currently lacks a state fish. HB 312 addresses this gap and celebrates a species that defines Ohio’s natural heritage.

Thank you for your consideration and support of HB 312.

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