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In Support of HB 312

It is said that the charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of what is elusive but attainable- a perpetual series of occasions for hope. It seems to me that designating a state fish for Ohio is in the same boat- elusive but attainable. We have failed too many times in the past to name a State Fish for our great state. Ohio is in the company of landlocked Iowa, who currently has a bill to name a state fish, and Indiana-a state that has under 50 miles of Great Lake coastline, as the only States in our Union without a recognized State Fish. The time is now for the residents of Ohio and our State Legislature to step up and demand that we do not become the only state left officially fishless.

Here in Ohio we are home to the envy of not just the country- but of the world- 10,000 square miles of Lake Erie's fresh water with 312 miles of its coastline. In addition to that, we have over 90,000 miles of rivers and streams. On any given weekend you will find scores of anglers casting out their lines in hopes of bringing in the big one. From the shores of Lake Erie, to the Mighty Cuyahoga, all the way to the Ohio River- you will find them there. People gather together with family and friends to all share their love for fishing. Let us give these sportsmen what they deserve- an official state fish.

Now when I share this story of the need for a State Fish to my friends and colleagues- there is first outrage that we do not have one already. Then there is a resounding show of support for this bill. However for a few, there is a follow up question- "Why the Walleye?". To that I say- The walleye is the MOST deserving fish to be recognized as OUR State Fish. The walleye is already the unofficial state fish of Ohio, tens of millions of walleye are in lake Erie alone, and Walleye tournaments in Ohio rival that of any other state, bringing in individuals from all over the county to our shores.

It is high time to come together and pass what is long overdue. To finally be the ones to designate the Walleye as the OFFICIAL State Fish of the Great State of Ohio.

Thank you