



05 March, 2025

To: Chairperson Jones, Vice Chair Blasdel, Rank Member Rogers

Re: House Bill 96

March 2025

Chairperson, Members of the Committee,

My name is Paul Campbell, and I am the Director of Development for the National Wild Turkey Federation, an Ohio resident, a lifelong hunter, angler, conservationist, I am here today to express my strong support for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the Ohio Division of Wildlife, particularly regarding the proposed updates in House Bill 96. These changes are crucial to ensuring the long-term sustainability of Ohio's natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Ohio has long been a premier destination for hunting and fishing, attracting both residents and nonresidents to enjoy its abundant wildlife and well-managed public lands. The proposed increases in nonresident fishing and deer permit fees are both reasonable and necessary. Currently, Ohio's fees are undervalued compared to other Midwest states that offer similar high-quality hunting and fishing experiences. By aligning nonresident fees with regional standards, we can better fund conservation efforts while keeping resident fees stable.

The additional revenue—projected to be between \$4 million and \$6 million annually—will directly support the Wildlife Fund. These funds are essential for habitat management, conservation programs, and ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy Ohio's natural resources. It is also worth noting that Ohio offers unique benefits with its licenses, such as not requiring additional permits for specific fishing or hunting opportunities, making these proposed adjustments fair and justified.

Furthermore, I strongly support removing barriers that prevent the Ohio Division of Wildlife from utilizing revenue generated from oil and gas royalties on state wildlife areas. Transferring these funds directly to the Wildlife Fund is a logical and necessary step to ensure they are used for their intended purpose—supporting fish and wildlife programs. Any failure to allocate these funds appropriately could jeopardize Ohio's eligibility for an additional \$25 million in federal Sport Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds. By securing these resources, Ohio can continue leading in wildlife conservation and responsible land management.

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As an advocate for Ohio's natural heritage, I urge the committee to support the provisions outlined in House Bill 96. These measures will strengthen Ohio's ability to conserve and manage its wildlife while ensuring that residents and visitors alike can continue to enjoy our state's outstanding outdoor opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your dedication to preserving Ohio's rich natural resources for generations to come.

Respectfully,

Yours in Conservation,

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