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TO: House Natural Resources Committee

FROM: Representatives Kevin D. Miller and Dani Isaacsohn

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Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 201: Expand Hunting Benefits for Landowners in Ohio

Chair Jones, Vice Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 201, legislation to expand hunting benefits for landowners in Ohio. This legislation is straightforward. H.B. 201 will first allow *parents of resident landowners* to hunt and trap on the landowner's property without obtaining a hunting license, deer permit, wild turkey permit, or fur-taker permit. Current statute allows *landowners and their children* to hunt on their property without a license or permit. This bill addresses the situation when land is transferred or sold by parents to their children, often when parents are older and/or on fixed incomes. The parents who have previously owned the property and hunted on their land for years under the landowner provision would now be penalized by having to buy licenses after passing the property to their children. This bill seeks to rectify this by allowing for these parents of landowners to continue hunting and trapping on the land without obtaining onerous permits upon transferring their property to their children.

Additionally, the legislation would also allow grandchildren of resident landowners under the age of 18 to hunt and trap on the landowner's property without obtaining a deer, turkey, or fur-taker permit. Under current law, grandchildren under 18 years already do not need to acquire a hunting license when hunting on their grandparents' land, but are still required to purchase deer, turkey, and fur-taker permits. H.B. 201 would waive the requirement of these later permits. As a note: the current language of H.B. 201 prescribes this to "grandchildren" and is not specified for "grandchildren *under 18 years*." This was a small error and we would like to see this bill amended to reflect the intended "under 18 years" in a future committee hearing.

At its core, this bill would help ensure the tradition of hunting on family land, a legacy for many Ohioans, is passed on to younger generations without financial or administrative barriers. In

addition, it ensures our older family members can continue to enjoy the outdoors free of charge, even after formally passing land ownership on to their children.

In the operating budget as passed by the Ohio House, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is raising the cost of non-resident hunting licenses. This will offset the potential loss in revenue caused by the exemptions proposed in this bill. The proposed budget increases non-resident license fees. This is expected to bring revenue of at least \$7.4M for ODNR. Through this bill, we are merely prescribing ODNR to expand hunting access to this narrow scope of Ohioans, while non-residents and others pay appropriate fees for our trophy whitetails.

Chair Jones, Vice Chair Blasdel, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Natural Resources Committee, thank you for allowing us to testify on H.B. 201. We would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

