



**Memo**

**To: Senators Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee**

**From: Rob Sexton - Special Consultant, Sportsmen's Alliance**

**Date: May 14, 2025**

**Re: Sportsmen's Priorities for House Bill 96 (as passed by the House)**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, I am here to speak on behalf of the Sportsmen's Alliance which was founded in 1978 in Columbus, Ohio to fight for the rights of hunters, anglers, trappers and recreational shooters. Our members range from a network of rod & gun clubs, sporting goods businesses, Ohio chapters of national affiliates, and individual hunters, anglers and trappers.

The Sportsmen's Alliance began the budget process with two priorities: securing oil and gas revenues that come from leases on ODNR-Division of Wildlife lands and seeking a non-resident fee increase on hunting and fishing fees. I will briefly address both items.

**Oil and Gas Revenues - Ohio sportsmen & women support the House language**

Governor Kasich and then later Governor DeWine, along with legislative leaders, sought support from Ohio sportsmen and women when contemplating oil and gas extraction from public lands, which includes Wildlife lands that have been purchased and maintained with our sportsmen's dollars. The Sportsmen's Alliance and our members support the wise use of our natural resources, and our members agreed, provided the royalties, lease fees, bonus funds, and any interest on those funds would be utilized to invest in the resources that are used by the millions of Ohioans who hunt, fish, trap and shoot every year. The economic impact of hunting is \$2 Billion each year and another \$3.1 Billion results from target shooting. While the General Assembly established some protections to ensure these funds would be sent to the specific land holding agency where the extraction occurred, the language needs to be completely unambiguous.

The House passed version of HB 96 makes these protections crystal clear, providing the General Assembly the opportunity to protect the hunting, fishing and shooting economies, investing in shooting ranges, and greatly diminishing the need to increase resident hunting, fishing, trapping and shooting range fees for many years. Keeping resident fees affordable keeps Ohioans

pumping billions into our economy, puts food on their table, and creates great fun for friends and family. We request the Senate maintain this language.

### **Non-Resident Hunting & Fishing Fees – Ohio Sportsmen & Women support House language**

The Governor's budget included increases to fishing and hunting fees for non-residents, specifically for Ohio's world class whitetail deer and walleye fishery. Ohio is both the "Walleye Capitol of the World" and a top five trophy whitetail deer state, comparable only with Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, and Kentucky.

Non-resident hunting and fishing license fees need to be both competitive and fair to Ohioans. House Bill 96 as passed by the House strikes a balance sought by Ohio hunters and anglers to ensure non-residents pay their share and that our fees are in line with what other comparable states charge our sportsmen and women. Maintaining this balance will ensure non-residents continue to come to Ohio and spend their money, while once again forestalling the need to increase resident fees. We request the Senate maintain the non-resident fee adjustments in the biennial budget.

### **Summary**

Both actions by the Ohio Senate will ensure continued quality and affordability for Ohioans and protect the multi-billion-dollar engine produced when we take to the field to hunt, fish, trap and shoot. We ask for your support to maintain these two items as passed by the House. Thank you for your time.