

May 13, 2025



BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
OHIO

The Ohio Senate
Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

RE: Support for restoration of H2Ohio funds and oil and gas payments to state parks

Dear members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

My home water is the Little Miami River, a beautiful tributary of the great Ohio River. I caught my first river fish, a tiny smallmouth bass, from the Little Miami just north of Loveland way back in 2010. I've spent countless hours on the banks and in the shallows of this river fishing and have come to value this water enormously. In late 2023, I was pleased to hear that funds from the H2Ohio program had been allocated to help preserve this gem of southwest Ohio, but in this budgeting process, that funding is now in doubt.

The board of the Ohio chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers asks that the committee restore H2Ohio funding to the requested levels so that the good work that these funds do can continue. My story is not unique, but one of the hundreds or thousands of Ohio stories about waterways and wetlands and wild places.

Using H2Ohio funds to purchase land, specifically riparian areas and wetlands, is critical to protecting water quality. It also has the additional benefit of enhancing access for all who use the river, including anglers and in some cases hunters. A river is only as public as it is accessible, so we ask that the committee restore the capacity to purchase land using H2Ohio funds.

While we continue to have concerns with the leasing process for oil and gas extraction from under state lands, we expect that the windfall from these leases be used to substantially improve those same state lands. While we are glad to see the appropriation of \$3M in oil and gas bonus payments for the Division of Wildlife, we ask that the committee release the expected \$40M in oil & gas bonus payments to the Division of Parks and Watercraft over the next two years. These funds go to support natural resource officers and to help maintain and improve our marinas, boat ramps, and campgrounds, critical to all those who make use of our public waterways.



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One goal of recent H2Ohio funds is to study and mitigate PFAS contamination in the Great and Little Miami rivers. It takes long term leadership, focused not only on today, but well into the future to tackle this problem and other water quality issues. We hope that this committee will display this long-term leadership, so that we can continue to build on our successes.

Sincerely,



Dustin Lindley
Board chair, Ohio chapter
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

