



Pheasants Forever Inc.  
Quail Forever  
1783 Buerkle Circle  
St. Paul, MN 55110

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Chairman Schaffer and members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding H.B. No. 96.

To start, we are grateful that your colleagues in the House included appropriation of \$3M in oil and gas bonus payments for the Division of Wildlife and supported the proposed increase to non-resident hunting and fishing license fees.

Next, Pheasants Forever is requesting the Senate restore H2Ohio funding to the levels proposed by the Governor. H2Ohio is a critical tool to compensate Ohio farmers and landowners for the conservation practices they implement that provide all Ohioans with cleaner water and air, healthy soil, and abundant fish and wildlife. Pheasants Forever staff and volunteers work with Ohio farmers to assist them in conserving and protecting the critical natural resources that Ohio communities depend upon. H2Ohio funding helps those farmers manage risk, grow their businesses, invest in rural communities, and maintain their farms for future generations. One example is the Dammeyer family's farm in Auglaize County. Recently their cropland needed a significant investment in subsurface tile drainage to be profitable and they found themselves discussing selling the farm rather than taking on the expense and risk. Fortunately, they learned about the H2Ohio funding available as an incentive with Lake Erie CREP and were able to enroll. Thanks to H2Ohio and other voluntary conservation programs, this 134 year old farm now remains in the family to pass on their conservation legacy to the next generation. This is just one of many examples of how H2Ohio funding is impacting the lives of Ohioans every day. The voluntary programs made possible by H2Ohio are accelerating Ohio into the future of conservation and sustainability and must be continued.

Additionally, we request that the Senate strike the language prohibiting the Division of Wildlife from purchasing land and easements with H2Ohio funding. In a state with little public land it is important to make strategic additions possible where willing sellers overlap with priority geographies for natural resources and public interest. This permanent protection also delivers critical habitat to wildlife and exponential benefit to water, air, and soil quality.

Lastly, we ask for the release of \$40M in oil and gas bonus payments to the Division of Parks and Watercraft. The State Park infrastructure these funds support, such as boat ramps, marinas, campgrounds, and more, are a valuable asset to Ohio's sportsmen and women to access hunting and fishing opportunities.

Pheasants Forever's mission is to conserve pheasants, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public access, education, and conservation advocacy. We have a rich history of meaningful wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement by working with farmers and landowners in Ohio. Today we have 32 locally led chapters, over 6,000 members, and 14 full-time employees delivering the mission in Ohio.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in Ohio