Senator Blackshear

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony for SB 398 to create the Adopt-a-Trail program alongside my colleague Senator Wilson.

We have all heard of the Adopt-a-Highway program. Organizations can sponsor sections of roadways to ensure that litter is cleaned up, and our state highways look nice. So we thought why not expand this idea to our state parks and trails? ODNR would benefit as the program could attract volunteers and increase awareness about trail beautification. While volunteer groups would get the chance to engage and contribute to our state parks and trails while being recognized for their efforts.

After conversations with ODNR, we found out that they have informally began partnering with outside organizations already, and by formalizing this program in state law, we can increase visibility and get more people involved with our state parks and trails.

Senator Wilson

With this bill ODNR retains flexibility. They can come to mutually beneficial agreements with organizations about the terms of the agreement, and the bill also would have little-to-no additional required costs for ODNR. This bill does not explicitly require signage but would allow ODNR to implement signage to help promote the program.

By establishing the Adopt-a-Trail program we can get more people involved in protecting our amazing natural resources here in Ohio while helping out ODNR in the process.

Chair Schaffer, Vice Chair Koehler, Ranking member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony for SB 398, and we would be happy to answer any questions.