

To Honorable Members: Chair: Jerry Cirino
Vice Chair: Brian Chavez
Ranking Member: Paula Hicks-Hudson

I am the President of the Stark County Federation of Conservation Clubs; we are composed 29 Member Clubs and Public organizations with over 4,000 members, based in and around Stark County. We support the Division of Wildlife and its goals of maintaining and managing wildlife and the public hunting area and lakes, waterways, and parks in Ohio. The State of Ohio over the last 6 ½ years under Governor Mike DeWine, ODNR Directory Mary Mertz, and DOW Chief Kendra Wecker has made tremendous improvements and acquisition of land for the public use. Like everything else in life things cost money and the costs keep rising, as such these needs do need to be addressed. HB 96 addresses these needs without becoming a burden on the residents of Ohio by increasing the license fees of non-residents.

I will try to address several points of HB 96 and why this makes sense for Ohio.

Nonresident Fishing License and Deer Permit Fees

- Increases Nonresident annual fishing license from \$49 to \$74 (plus writing fee).
- Increases Nonresident 3-day fishing license from \$24 to \$50 (plus writing fee).
- Modify the 1-day fishing license.
 - o Resident 1-day license remains \$13.
 - o Increases Nonresident 1-day license from \$13 to \$26 (plus writing fee).
- Increases the fee of a nonresident deer permit valid for hunting antlered or antlerless deer from \$74 to \$210 (plus writing fee).

Non-residents in Michigan, have to pay \$163 for Basic Hunting License and Deer License \$190, and a combination of Hunting and Fishing License for non-residents \$275.

Non-residents in Kentucky Fishing License \$55 and Hunting License \$160, Non-Resident Deer \$235 additional deer (two deer) \$15.

Non-resident Licenses in Pennsylvania are: Non-resident Fishing Licenses \$60.97, Non-resident Hunting \$101.97

Non-resident in West Virginia are: Non-resident Hunting License Class E \$119 Deer License Class RRG: \$43 Fishing License \$37 – Trout stamp \$10.00, Plus a Non-resident License for Hunting or Fishing is required to have the Conservation/Law Enforcement Stamp \$12.

Many states including these listed states require additional licenses for each season such as archery, gun, and muzzleloader season, while all seasons are included in the Ohio Non-resident license.

I checked these costs in these surrounding states to show how much these states charge non-residents including Ohioans to hunt and fish there. So Yes, we support this, Bill!! It is about time we leveled the field. This increase should keep the pressures off Ohioans for awhile with the projected revenue of 4-6 million annually and will help offset the inflationary pressures.

Gift Certificates

- Expands gift certificates to be used on conservation related items and products in addition to hunting and fishing licenses.
- Eliminates the one-year expiration of a gift certificate.

The proposed changes will expand the use of customers to purchase and redeem a gift certificate for all products and licenses the Division has and allowing the gift certificate to not expire after one year increases the probability that people will buy more in the future for special events such as grandkids visiting to hunt or fish.

Oil and Gas

The proposed process requires the Department to request the transfer of cash from the State Land Royalty Fund to a Department fund which then requires approval through the budget process or Controlling Board for Wildlife to access.

The process complicates access to the funds.

The Division of Wildlife receives royalty and bonus payments, which are deposited into the State Land Royalty Fund. The Director requests a mandatory transfer of funds back to the Department. Appropriation approval is required for the Division to spend from the Department fund.

A streamlined solution involves transferring the Division of Wildlife's share of oil and gas payments directly to the Wildlife Fund. Monies from oil and gas payments should always

be used to support the Division in acquiring and developing land for use by the public and not for nonrelated expenditures.

The Department fund is outside the direct control of the Division and comingled with revenue generated from other DNR properties.

License revenue is the primary source used to acquire properties. Revenue generated from these properties is also considered license revenue. The Division is required to use these funds for the administration of the division pursuant to Chapters 1531. and 1533. of the Revised Code (ORC 1533.28). Doing so could be considered a diversion and jeopardize eligibility to accessing <\$25M in Sport Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds dedicated to restoration and enhancement of wildlife and their habitats.

We support HB 96 and hope these changes will help insure the future of Ohio and its hunting and fishing heritage for future generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Rutledge

President

Stark County Federation of Conservation Clubs