

Chairman Cirino, Vice chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My Name is Paul Brooks, I come to you today as the Chairman of the Board of the League of Ohio Sportsmen, representing sportsmens clubs, rod and gun clubs and individual sportsmen. Our motto is good soil, clean water, more trees and that very motto is the subject of this testimony today. Water quality is so very important in Ohio with the H2Ohio program leading the way to a better place. We in Ohio have abused our waterways leading to much concern as to our future. Lake Erie is a huge powerhouse in producing not only tourist and recreational fishing opportunities but millions in business income each year. We broke this, I am asking that we continue to fix it. Headway is being made and I will find it difficult to find the words to explain to my grandchildren The state of our water ways if we can not move forward to better funding levels, I ask that H2Ohio be funded at the 26.5 million level the House had in their budget for the Division of Wildlife. It has been exciting to watch as the Division of Forestry has developed a tree nursery. What a great thing to have seedlings available from a source in Ohio as we replant trees to make our lives more pleasant and provide future income. I ask that you restore 648,000 dollars to the division of forestry in this budget. I also ask that Senator Wilkins amendment be supported by this committee. I am fully aware that the state budget needs to be balanced. Balanced is an interesting word, our waterways, our forests, are out of balance and have been for a long time, we as Ohioans are the cause of these imbalances, we as Ohioans ask that these waterways and forests be continued to be brought back to balance. I thank you for your time today and hope that you will consider my plea for more trees, good soil and clean water.

Paul Brooks