

As Introduced

**136th General Assembly
Regular Session
2025-2026**

S. C. R. No. 19

Senator Wilkin

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge the Congress of the United States to enact the Ohio River Restoration Program Act to bring clean water, enhanced fish and aquatic wildlife, economic benefits, expanded recreation opportunities, and public health protections to Ohio.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING):

WHEREAS, The Ohio River is a major river in the United States, with its watershed spanning 15 states and serving 30 million people; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio River is 981 miles long and forms the entire 451-mile southern border of Ohio; and

WHEREAS, 40 of Ohio's streams and rivers, fed by hundreds of tributaries, flow into the Ohio River; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio River watershed covers approximately 29,750 square miles within Ohio, accounting for nearly 75% of Ohio's total landmass and 14.5% of the entire Ohio River Basin's drainage area; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio River is a massive economic driver for Ohio, with maritime commerce generating billions of dollars in business revenue, personal income, and transportation savings annually. Cargo activity generates about \$26.5 billion in total

economic value; and 21

WHEREAS, Earth Economics found that the 68 million acres of 22
natural ecosystems in the Ohio River Basin provide at least \$50 23
billion in public benefits annually and a projected value of 24
\$1.17 trillion over 30 years; and 25

WHEREAS, In 2023, the national nonprofit American Rivers 26
designated the Ohio River as America's second most endangered 27
river; and 28

WHEREAS, Degradation of water quality, harmful algal 29
blooms, toxic contamination, failing infrastructure, and 30
flooding events pose significant risks to public health, 31
including threats to safe drinking water, increased exposure to 32
waterborne illness, and elevated risks of respiratory and other 33
chronic health conditions; and 34

WHEREAS, Investments in water quality improvement, 35
watershed restoration, green infrastructure, and toxic 36
remediation will reduce public health risks, lower long-term 37
healthcare costs, strengthen community resilience to extreme 38
weather events, and improve overall quality of life for 39
residents throughout the Basin; and 40

WHEREAS, H.R. 5966 has been introduced in the United States 41
House of Representatives and S. 3796 has been introduced in the 42
United States Senate, both with wide bipartisan support; and 43

WHEREAS, H.R. 5966 and S. 3796 create the Ohio River Basin 44
Restoration Program to improve water quality, increase flood 45
resiliency, restore natural systems, protect and restore fish 46
and wildlife habitats, prevent and control invasive aquatic 47
species, remediate toxic substances, improve public access and 48
recreation, and improve public outreach and education in the 49
Ohio River Basin; and 50

WHEREAS, Ohio will benefit from an improved Ohio River and 51

its tributaries, including improved drinking water, economic 52
benefits to communities, infrastructure investments, enhanced 53
recreational opportunities, and measurable public health 54
protections; now therefore be it 55

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the 136th General 56
Assembly of the State of Ohio, urge approval of H.R. 5966 and S. 57
3796, creating the Ohio River Restoration Program Act, to bring 58
clean water, enhanced fish and aquatic wildlife, economic 59
benefits, expanded recreation opportunities, and improved public 60
health protections to Ohio; and be it further 61

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit duly 62
authenticated copies of this resolution to the members of the 63
Ohio Congressional delegation. 64