

Right to Hunt and Fish Ohio

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Joint Resolution 3.

I was fortunate to have been introduced to hunting and fishing as a child. I have many memories of foggy mornings trolling across a serene lake in a 16-foot aluminum boat with my father and brother... the tug on the end of the line, the wild fight of some unknown fish on the other end of the line and at last, a long, sleek toothy fish coming to the surface out of the murky depths.

Shore lunch fish fry's, evenings around a campfire with a whole fresh fish wrapped in foil baking in the coals while loons echo off the shorelines in the distance as the sun sets.

I had the opportunity to also meet a professor from OSU and Captain of the Great Lakes by the name of Walt Seifert. White scruffy beard weathered tan skin, and his black captains' hat, with a pipe stubbed out of his mouth, telling us stories of the Great Lakes while sitting on the dock as the lake waves crashed outside of the break wall.

He taught us how to pry the Lake Erie walleye and smallmouth from the rocky shoals around the islands, from a lake that was dead just years earlier from the wastes of the cities being dumped unchecked for years into the rivers that led to the Lake. Walt was very instrumental in the clean-up of Lake Erie and the Clean Water Act as a whole

I developed a great love of fishing, the Lakes and Streams themselves and the peace they brought me in times of stress and despair throughout life.

As I chased my career in carpentry and construction I found myself building sailboats in Grand River Ohio. The pay was dismal, but the work was one of great satisfaction... I hated to leave that job but could hardly pay my bills. I fed myself for almost 2 years on the bounties of Lake Erie and the Grand River. For a \$19.00 license I could keep my freezer full of walleye, perch, steelhead trout and the occasional salmon. Fishing provided me life... sustenance... in a time of great need

in my life. I will also mention that the wild game along the waterways also found their way to my freezer over the years.

There is immense satisfaction in providing one's own food and a full freezer from the harvests of one's efforts in the woods and on the waters.

Today I own and operate Anonymous Lake Erie Charters. I have done so for 5 years now. I work every weekend that the Lake weather allows following a week of my full-time job in construction. It is a work of passion. Passion for the Lakes and Streams, Passion for the peace I have found there. Passion for wondering what is tugging on the other end of the line... I do not do it for the money as there is little money to be made. I donate trips to many 501c3 organizations as fundraisers.

The National Wild Turkey Federation

Women in the Outdoors

Wounded Warriors

Some at a county, state, and national level.

I take disabled veterans fishing... under privileged children or children with no mentors in the outdoors. I take family's fishing that otherwise may not have an opportunity to stock their freezers full of Lake Erie walleye...

I watch children's eyes light up full of wonder as we pull those toothy green gators to the surface and into the net. Smiles, laughs, memories I hope they cherish for a lifetime. I wonder if they feel that same excitement as I did so many years ago feeling that tug on the line and that wild fight on the other end of the line on those foggy mornings..... the same excitement I still feel today.....

I hope and pray, If I touch one child's life and instill the passion of fishing.... in just one life.... It has been worth it.

Fishing has fed millions of people on every single continent for thousands of years. From biblical times and even earlier. It has been documented fishing occurred even in prehistoric times and dates back 40,000 years.

According to the American Sport Fishing Association in 2011 Sportfishing supported 828,000 jobs in the US, \$35 Billion in salaries and wages and had a \$115 Billion impact to the nation's economy.

In 2012, Lake Erie alone, harvested 4.8 million lbs. of fish and an estimated commercial value of \$5.8 million dollars of revenue.

In 2018 2,610,700 anglers spent 2.1 Billion dollars while fishing in Ohio, supporting restaurants, hotels, marinas, gas stations and bait and tackle shops as well as license sales helping to fund the ODNR.

Nationally anglers provided \$752 million in license sales, \$650 Million in Excise tax, and \$283 million in donations to conservation efforts.

We as people deserve the right to feed ourselves from the land and seas and waterways of this great planet as our forefathers and their forefathers have done.

In closing, Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Joint Resolution 3