

Senate Transportation Committee
Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, and Ranking Member Antonio
Testimony of Sean White, Co-Founder Head Brewer at Little Fish Brewing Co.
House Bill 74, Ohio Transportation Budget

March 9, 2021

Chairwoman Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation Committee. My name is Sean White, and I am the Co-Founder and Head Brewer at Little Fish Brewing Company in Athens, OH.

Our mission has been to brew world class beer while sustainably supporting local economies. We designed several of the original core beer recipes utilizing the Ohio-grown ingredients available at the time, and in 2016, we brewed the first commercial batch of “100% Ohio-grown” beer since at least prohibition, possibly ever.

The way we see it, sustainability is not a state of being, but rather a path that you decide to take. We are doing our best to walk that path, and we are always looking for the next thing that we can do to be more sustainable. One measure we have taken was to choose a location that was within a 5-minute drive from the center of Athens, so as not to require people to burn a lot of gas to come see us. We also chose a spot that was right off the bike path, and city bus line, so that people could use alternative transportation. That is why it makes perfect sense for us to be supporting measures that encourage electric vehicle (EV) production and purchase in Ohio.

Ohio’s current up-front and annual registration fee structure, however, is not serving to provide that encouragement. The \$200 annual registration fee for EVs and \$100 fee for hybrids in Ohio are the highest in the nation, doubling the rates in Illinois and others in the region. Electric vehicle owners are prepared to pay their share for road maintenance and repair and other infrastructure developments paid for by these fees. But the long-term disproportionate fees for electric and hybrid vehicles send a clear message to automotive manufacturers that Ohio is not interested in expanding their advanced transportation market. That is not a strategy that makes much sense to us.

We urge the Ohio General Assembly to reduce these fees to a national average rate of \$100 for EVs and \$50 for plug-in hybrids. This will not result in a significant decrease to revenues to the state but will make a real difference to those weighing the benefits of purchasing an electric vehicle.

Our business makes strategic financial decisions every day to stay afloat and turn a profit. We have made the decision to invest in sustainable practices because we know it’s good for our community, our planet, and our bottom line. We are now asking you to make that same decision and invest in the next generation of economic development for Ohio—a clean transportation market. We are asking you to support the reduction of EV and hybrid registration fees in House Bill 74, the state transportation budget.