

The Honorable Troy Balderson
Chairman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215



10 April 2018

Chairman Balderson and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Ohio Conservation Federation and its member organizations, I am testifying today to share our concerns regarding SB 257. The Ohio Conservation Federation is a federation of hunting, fishing and trapping organizations. Our members include national organizations, such as Ducks Unlimited and the Ruffed Grouse Society, statewide organizations like the Ohio State Trappers Association and Buckeye Big Buck Club, and regional organizations such as the Columbiana County Federation of Conservation Clubs. At the very heart of our conservation ethic is support for a strong and effective Ohio Division of Wildlife.

While we applaud the customer-service aspects of SB 257, we strongly support the findings of Southwick Associates in their October 2016 report on hunting and fishing license structure that was commissioned and paid for by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Southwick's report recommends that in order to minimize risk of revenue loss, combo-licenses and multi-year licenses should be offered with convenience as the primary incentive, and that any discount greater than 5% would "risk a loss of revenue as results indicate greater discounts would not increase hunter participation enough to offset losses from the sale of each license." With effective discounts as high as 12-14% in the proposed legislation, the Ohio Conservation Federation is concerned that these discounts will worsen the already dire fiscal status of the Division of Wildlife, resulting in further degradation of our public shooting ranges, wildlife habitat management, fish stocking, wildlife officer staffing, and public outreach.

Ohio's 1.5 million licensed hunters, anglers and trappers have always led the way, supporting our habitat, wildlife, fish, and dedicated wildlife officers through our license fees and fueling a powerful economic engine, spending more than \$4 billion annually and supporting tens of thousands of jobs statewide. The long history and successful partnership between Ohio's Division of Wildlife and our hunters, anglers and trappers has created a wildlife heritage that has been the envy of every state.

The Ohio Conservation Federation believes that the proposed discounts pose an avoidable risk to the Division of Wildlife and our outdoor heritage and request that if the bill moves forward that it be amended to include discounts of 5% or less as recommended by Southwick Associates.

If we can be of any service or answer any questions regarding, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours,

Matt Misicka

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