



***Opposition to H.B. No. 288
September 25, 2019***

Chair Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking member Brown and the members of the House Civil Justice committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony in opposition to House Bill 288.

My name is Lisa Daris and I am the Executive Coordinator of the Ohio to Erie Trail Organization and I am here with some of our Board Members as well. The Ohio to Erie Trail is a 326-mile collection of multi-use trails that provide citizens with exercise and adventure opportunities, all while enjoying the natural beauty of Ohio. The trail is named for the bodies of water it connects, the Ohio River and Lake Erie. The intended route for the complete trail is 90% done and currently follows short road connectors for the missing 10%.

The board and its local partners such as Park Districts have been working to connect these multi use trail systems since 1991 and each year trail projects progress to reduce the distance of the trail gaps. I represent our 15 Member Board of Directors and 12 Member Board of Advisors. These members live, work and vote in numerous Ohio Counties including Butler, Clark, Cuyahoga, Delaware, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Holmes, Knox, Lake, Madison, Summit and Wayne counties.

Most importantly, the evidence from across the country is clear. Multi use trail systems are drivers of economic development and increased property valuation. In many cases, a multi use trail being developed has reinvigorated communities near the trail in places like Loveland, Mount Vernon and London. The Trust for Public Land says Cleveland Metro Parks creates Economic Value of \$873 million per year, which is partially attributable to their robust system of Recreational Trails including the Ohio to Erie Trail. We include the infographic in this testimony.

Our board has concerns about the specific definition of a “recreational trail” as a public trail that is used for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, ski touring, canoeing, or other non motorized forms of recreational travel. Would a recreational trail be excluded from this limitation if it is also utilized as a transportation corridor?

In the testimony of the bill's sponsor, he referred to "something as trivial as a bike-trail" while speaking in support of preserving the status quo for a Sportsman's Club. Is it the role of the State Assembly to determine which hobbies are trivial and which are deserving of protection under state law?

The board is concerned with the sponsor's use of the term "Bike Trail" when actually referring to a Multi Use Trail. This shorthand is reinforcing the misconception that Ohio non-motorized recreational trails are being built only for an exclusive group of Ohioans who use a bicycle for recreation or transportation. A property owner testified that the trail is unnecessary because bicyclists could easily ride on a nearby road. That statement ignores the needs of other trail users, such as a parent pushing a child in a stroller, is road travel the ideal solution for this trail user? While trails like the Ohio to Erie Trail do encourage travel on a bicycle, it is just one of many uses including hikers, runners, walkers, skaters, bird watchers, people using wheelchairs, families with strollers and even winter snowshoers and cross-country skiers.

Ohioans are excited about trails and consistently pressure their leadership to expand the networks and fill in the missing trail segments. Robust trail systems that connect to destinations are far from "trivial", they are community amenities and they can even become visitor attractions; the same way communities near Lake Erie and Hocking Hills recognize these natural attractions as something to preserve and promote.

The Ohio to Erie Trail is already making a community impact as demonstrated in our year to date Trail Guide Sales - 69% of our guides are being made to residents within the state which means Ohioans are choosing to spend 3-8 days vacationing in their OWN state, directly attributable to the creation of this community amenity. We include a graphic demonstrating the locations of the 2019 guide orders.

House Bill 288 represents a heavy-handed state mandated solution to an isolated local issue. It completely ignores the needs of large numbers of citizens of Ohio who regularly call upon their elected leaders to support the continued development of Ohio's popular trail system.

The Ohio to Erie Trail Organization is strongly urging the House Civil Justice Committee to vote NO on House Bill 288.

The Ohio to Erie Trail Fund
118 Graceland Blvd #146
Columbus, OH 43214
614-918-3636
OhioToErieTrail@gmail.com

Cleveland Metroparks creates **\$873 MILLION**
in economic value each year

THE TRUST
FOR
PUBLIC
LAND



Reservations provide stormwater infiltration valued at **\$20.4 MILLION ANNUALLY**
and reduce pollution costs by **\$8.09 MILLION A YEAR**



Reservations and trails raise the value of nearby homes by **\$155 MILLION**



Cleveland Metroparks
GENERATES **\$616 MILLION ANNUALLY**
in direct visitor spending



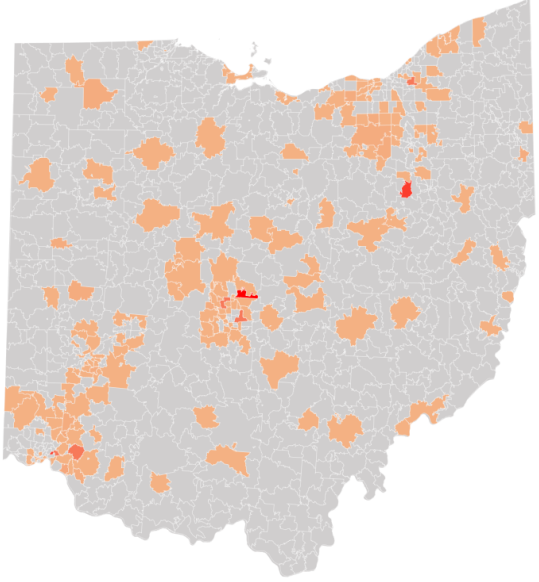
Health benefits accrue to **114,000 ADULTS**
yielding medical cost savings of **\$160 MILLION ANNUALLY**



Residents receive a **\$64.6 MILLION PER YEAR BENEFIT**
for recreational use of Cleveland Metroparks

See the full report, **THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF CLEVELAND METROPARKS** at tpl.org/cleveland-metroparks-2018

Maps Sold in Ohio 2019 (as of 9/3/19)



Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, 1992