

James Harris
Senior Regional Representative
Ohio Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever
245 Staunton Jasper Rd SW
Washington Court House, OH 43160

Senate Finance Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215
May 18, 2023



Re: Interested Party Testimony for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources FY24-25 Budget (HB 33)

Greetings Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the committee,

My name is James Harris and I'm here today to express my concerns about the cuts being proposed in HB33 that impact the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) budget. I am also representing Ohio's 5,700 Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever members, and 32 community-based chapters that are made up of dedicated volunteers and supporters that do great things for our state's wildlife and natural resources. Our work is not done alone, and we depend on our ability to use our volunteer raised funding to match and partner with state agencies like the ODNR, especially with the Division of Wildlife and Division of Forestry. Our conservation successes also include leveraging our funds with federal agencies and other conservation partners.

These proposed funding cuts will impact our ability to continue to enhance and restore wildlife habitat, that in turn provide many other ecosystem benefits, such as improving water and air quality that all Ohioans benefit from. In addition, we know that Ohioans depend on robust funding in order to have the opportunity to participate in the outdoors and enjoy Ohio's abundant natural resources. We are concerned that the cuts proposed in HB33 will limit hunting and other natural resources based outdoor recreation and education opportunities.

We request that the General Assembly restore ODNR's funding to the levels outlined in the Governor's budget as introduced.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this very important issue. We would appreciate a strong consideration of our request.

If we can be of any further assistance or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

James Harris
Senior Regional Representative
Ohio Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever
JHarris@pheasantsforever.org
(301) 524-9201

Since 1982 Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's mission has been to conserve pheasants, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public access, education, and conservation advocacy.