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WILDLIFE OFFICER LODGE 143

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## **FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE OF OHIO AND WILDLIFE OFFICER LODGE #143 SUPPORT INCREASED FEES FOR HUNTING PERMITS**

Columbus, OH [June 20] – The Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio (FOP) and Wildlife Officer Lodge #143 are asking legislators to support proposed fee increases for hunting licenses in the State of Ohio.

The current proposal would increase fees for nonresident permits to hunt deer and wild turkey. The increased fees would help fund the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the Division of Wildlife which pays for Wildlife Officers.

Ohio FOP President Jay McDonald said that the fees are necessary to ensure Ohio's natural resources are protected and made available for public use.

“The Division of Wildlife is operated solely by user fees, including hunting permits. Such fees are put aside in a dedicated fund for the management and protection of Ohio's wildlife resources,” McDonald said. “The Division has been incredibly responsible with these fees and hasn't seen a budget increase in over 14 years. Now is the time to ensure that the members of FOP Lodge #143 wildlife officers have the resources to continue providing the most successful wildlife conservation model in the world right here in Ohio.”

Wildlife Officers consider themselves the thin green line, a symbol that represents a commitment to provide effective wildlife law enforcement in the face of enormous odds. Wildlife Officers often work alone and in remote areas, encountering both recreational outdoorsmen and criminals seeking shelter in lightly patrolled areas.

McDonald said that the Wildlife Officers protect and serve our communities and deserve additional resources to help do their jobs even better.

“These officers risk their lives to protect and serve not only Ohio residents, but also the public property and wildlife resources put under their watchful eye,” McDonald said. “Increasing the nonresident hunting permit fees is the least we can do after 14 years to help ensure Wildlife Officers have the resources necessary to do their job.”

McDonald said the FOP supports the increase as proposed in the budget as a good start, but also believes that the general assembly should look at increasing fees for Ohio resident hunters as well.

“It's about investing in public safety and protecting our natural resources,” McDonald concluded.

*The Ohio FOP represents thousands of law enforcement personnel from across the state, including Lodge #143 which houses Commissioned Wildlife Officers from Ohio's Division of Wildlife.*

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