

I am here testifying this afternoon as the President of the Columbiana County Federation of Conservation Clubs. The CCFCC is a group of hunters, anglers, boaters, and others, who care very much about the natural resources of our county and the State of Ohio.

I understand that the Sunset Review Committee will be looking to still try to eliminate the fourteen local wild, scenic, and recreational river advisory councils in the State of Ohio. SB 293 was recently amended to remove the language that would have reconfigured the councils so that instead of maintaining fourteen separate councils, there would be only one Scenic Rivers Advisory Council comprised of fourteen total members – one representing each of the designated wild, scenic, and recreational rivers. I believe that ODNR thought that SB 293 was not the proper vehicle for this change, so that is the reason that this committee will be looking at eliminating the local wild, scenic, and recreational river advisory councils sometime in the future.

In Columbiana County we have the Little Beaver Creek, one of only three rivers in the state designated as Wild and Scenic. We have a very active Little Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River Advisory Council. The citizens of our county have always worked to protect a wonderful natural asset that defines Columbiana County. Our county engineer, Bert Dawson, and our three county commissioners, Mike Halleck, Jim Hoppel, and Tim Weigle, have all gone on record as being in support of maintaining the current status of the local advisory councils.

These fourteen local wild, scenic, and recreational advisory councils are comprised of volunteers who are local users and conservationists with a stake in the local waterway. The costs of these councils to ODNR is minimal so it seems unreasonable to eliminate these local councils, all supposedly in the name of efficiency. Government works best when local citizens are involved and have a stake in decisions that affect them. Quite often legal decisions are made by looking at whether some action is deemed to be reasonable or not. It seems very unreasonable to me to eliminate the local councils.