
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Division of Wildlife

Hunting and fishing

- Increases, from \$74 to \$210, the fee for each nonresident deer permit.
- Increases various fishing license fees charged to a nonresident who is not a resident of a reciprocal state.
- Expands the allowable uses for hunting and fishing related gift certificates.
- Makes permissive, instead of mandatory, the Chief of the Division of Wildlife's authority to adopt rules governing hunting and fishing related gift certificates.
- Eliminates the requirement that the Chief establish fees for gift certificates that equal the total fee for the applicable license, permit, or stamp.
- Eliminates the requirement that a gift certificate expire one year after the date of purchase.
- Allows a resident landowner's parents to hunt and trap on the landowner's property without obtaining a hunting license, deer permit, wild turkey permit, or fur taker permit.
- Allows a resident landowner's grandchildren under 18 to hunt and trap on the landowner's property without obtaining a deer permit, wild turkey permit, or fur taker permit.
- Clarifies that, for both in-state and out-of-state residents who own land in Ohio, the landowner's spouse may hunt deer or wild turkey and hunt or trap fur-bearing animals on that property without a deer, wild turkey, or fur taker permit.
- Revises the definition of "wild boar" or "feral swine" for purposes of the law governing hunting and fishing, including clarifying that a wild boar or feral swine is a hog, boar, or pig that appears to be untamed, undomesticated, or in a wild state.

Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management

Permit to plug and abandon fee

- Eliminates the \$250 permit fee generally required to be paid when applying for a permit to plug and abandon any oil and gas well.

Oil and Gas Resolution and Remediation Fund

- Creates the Oil and Gas Resolution and Remediation Fund (OGRRF) as a custodial fund.
- Requires the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management to use money in the OGRRF to plug orphaned wells in accordance with current law.

- Authorizes the Chief to use the OGRRF for expenses that are critical and necessary for the protection of human health and safety and the environment related to oil and gas production.
- Requires the Treasurer of State, at the beginning of each fiscal year, to transfer the amount of money in the Oil and Gas Well Fund that exceeds the total amount appropriated to it for that fiscal year to the OGRRF.
- Requires the Treasurer to make disbursements, other than interest earnings, from the OGRRF on a quarterly basis, on order of the Chief.
- Requires the \$50 filing fee for an exempt domestic well or exempt Mississippian well (that may be filed in lieu of posting a surety bond) and any funds collected by the Chief from the issuance of corrective action orders to be deposited into the OGRRF instead of the Oil and Gas Well Fund.
- Requires interest earned on the OGRRF to be reserved for use by the ODNR Director for any ODNR-related purpose, subject to the written approval of the Technical Advisory Council on Oil and Gas.

Oil and gas orders – appeals

- Allows the Oil and Gas Commission to decide an appeal of an order of the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management or a rule adopted by the Chief without a hearing when, in its judgment, it is appropriate to do so.

Division of Water Resources

H2Ohio

- Prohibits ODNR from using more than \$2.5 million each fiscal year from the H2Ohio Fund to purchase land or a conservation easement or to issue grants for such purposes.

Division of Parks and Watercraft

Creation of new funds

- Creates the Park Lodges, Maintenance, and Repair Fund and the Parks and Watercraft Holding Fund, both in the state treasury, and specifies the purposes of each fund.

Watercraft registration and fees

- Specifies that a required watercraft registration certificate may be in physical or digital form.
- Allows a registration certificate to be presented in physical or digital form within 72 hours of when a watercraft that is not numbered is stopped by a law enforcement officer, rather than only in physical form as in current law.
- Applies the 72-hour registration certificate presentment requirement to kayaks and inflatable watercraft meeting the definition of a paddlecraft.
- Specifies that the above provisions take effect January 1, 2027.

Rules governing preventing ice on state park's water

- States that if the Chief of the ODNR Division of Parks and Recreation adopts rules for the issuance of a permit for preventing or limiting ice formation on the surface of water that is located in a state park on property owned or managed by the Division, the Chief may not levy a fee for the issuance of the permit.

Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

- Allows the Chief of the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves to sell merchandise and other items related to, or that promote, the state's wildlife and unique environment, and general ecological preservation and conservation.
- Requires the money received from the sale of merchandise to be paid into the state treasury to the credit of the Natural Areas and Preserves Fund.

Division of Mineral Resources Management

Long-term Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund

- Creates in the state treasury the Long-Term Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to be administered by the Chief of the Division of Mineral Resources Management.
- Specifies that the fund must consist of grants awarded by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior from the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund and be used for the abatement of the causes and the treatment of the effects of acid mine drainage resulting from coal mine practices.

Program Support Fund

- Codifies the Program Support Fund, which supports ODNR's centralized service support offices using payments from divisions within ODNR and other payments received for purposes of the fund.

ODNR contracts with local government for services

- Requires ODNR to enter into a contract with municipal corporations and townships to reimburse them for expenses incurred in providing certain services on state park land or at facilities owned or managed by ODNR if ODNR does not provide the services.

Local consent prior to ODNR altering a historical site

- Prohibits ODNR from physically working on or altering an oil and gas historical site without the consent of certain local entities.

Division of Wildlife

Hunting and fishing

(R.C. 1533.10, 1533.11, 1533.111, 1533.32, and 1533.131)

Nonresident permit and license fees

The bill increases, from \$74 to \$210, the fee for each nonresident deer permit. It also increases fishing license fees charged to a nonresident who is not a resident of a reciprocal state as follows:

1. Annual fishing license fee, from \$49 to \$74;
2. Three-day tourist fishing license fee, from \$24 to \$50; and
3. One-day fishing license fee, from \$13 to \$26.

Gift certificates

The bill expands the allowable uses for hunting and fishing related gift certificates to allow a person to obtain, pay for, or purchase both of the following:

1. Any license, permit, or stamp that the Chief of the Division of Wildlife so designates as gift certificate eligible; and
2. Any user fee or conservation-related item, such as a magazine subscription, that the Chief so designates as gift certificate eligible.

Current law allows gift certificates to be used only for hunting and fishing licenses; fur taker, deer, and wild turkey permits; and wetlands habitat stamps.

The bill also allows, instead of requires, the Chief to adopt rules governing hunting and fishing related gift certificates. Further, it eliminates current law's requirement that the Chief establish fees for gift certificates that equal the total fee for the applicable license, permit, or stamp. Finally, it eliminates the requirement that a gift certificate expire one year after the date of purchase.

Hunting on family land

The bill expands the list of relatives who may hunt and trap on an Ohio landowner's property without purchasing a hunting license, deer or wild turkey permit, or fur taker permit. As used in this context, an Ohio landowner includes:

1. An Ohio resident who owns land in Ohio;
2. An Ohio resident member of an LLC or an Ohio resident partner of an LLP, with three or fewer members or partners, that own land in Ohio; and
3. An Ohio resident trustee or an Ohio resident beneficiary of a trust that has a total of three or fewer trustees and beneficiaries, that own land in Ohio.

Hunting license

The bill allows the parents of an Ohio landowner to hunt on the landowner's property without a hunting license. Under current law, an Ohio landowner's children and the landowner's grandchildren under 18 may do so.

Deer and wild turkey permit

The bill allows an Ohio landowner's parents and grandchildren under 18 to hunt deer and wild turkey on the landowner's property without obtaining a deer or wild turkey permit. Under current law, an Ohio landowner's children may do so.

Fur taker permit

The bill also allows an Ohio landowner's parents and grandchildren under 18 to hunt and trap fur-bearing animals on the landowner's property without obtaining a fur taker permit. Currently, an Ohio landowner's children may hunt or trap fur-bearing animals on the land without obtaining a fur taker permit.

Spouse of an Ohio landowner

The bill allows the spouses of both in-state and out-of-state residents who own land in Ohio to hunt deer or wild turkey and hunt or trap fur-bearing animals on that property without a deer, wild turkey, or fur taker permit. Current law does not explicitly allow the spouse of an Ohio landowner to engage in such hunting activities without a permit.

Wild boar or feral swine definition

(R.C. 1531.01)

The bill revises the definition of "wild boar" or "feral swine" for purposes of the law governing hunting and fishing. Under current law, a "wild boar" or "feral swine" is either of the following:

1. Members of the family suidae, including a wild pig, wild hog, feral hog, and feral pig and an old world swine, razorback, European wild boar, Russian wild boar, and any hybrids or crossbreeds thereof;
2. Members of the family tayassuidae, including collared peccary and javelina, and any hybrids or crossbreeds of members of the family tayassuidae.

The bill adds that a wild boar or feral swine is also a hog, boar, or pig that appears to be untamed, undomesticated, or in a wild state; and a wild pig, wild hog, feral hog, or feral pig that appears contained in a licensed wild animal hunting preserve or a wholly enclosed preserve for hunting or trapping. The bill specifically excludes a domesticated pig of the family suidae that is legally confined or held in captivity from the definition's provisions.

Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management

Permit to plug and abandon fee

(R.C. 1509.13, conforming change in R.C. 1509.071)

The bill eliminates the \$250 nonrefundable permit fee that is generally required to be paid when a person applies for a permit to plug and abandon any oil and gas well. Under continuing law, a person must apply for and receive a permit from the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management before plugging and abandoning a well. The bill, however, retains the \$500 fee an applicant must pay to receive the permit in an expedited manner, which the Chief must issue within seven days after submission of the request for expedited review, unless the Chief, by order, denies the application.

Oil and Gas Resolution and Remediation Fund

(R.C. 1509.02, 1509.07, 1509.071, 1509.075, and 1509.38)

The bill creates the Oil and Gas Resolution and Remediation Fund (OGRRF) as a custodial fund. It requires the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management to use money in the OGRRF to plug orphaned wells in accordance with current law. The Chief may use the OGRRF for expenses that are critical and necessary for the protection of human health and safety and the environment related to oil and gas production. The Treasurer of State must disburse money, other than interest earnings, from the OGRRF quarterly on order of the Chief.

Investments

The bill allows the Treasurer of State to invest any portion of the OGRRF not needed for immediate use in the same manner as, and subject to all provisions of law with respect to the investment of, state funds.

Deposits into the OGRRF

Under the bill, the Treasurer of State, at the beginning of each fiscal year, must transfer to the OGRRF the amount of money in the Oil and Gas Well Fund that is in excess of the total amount appropriated to it for that fiscal year. Additionally, the bill requires the following to be credited to the OGRRF, rather than the Oil and Gas Well Fund as in current law:

1. The \$50 filing fee for an exempt domestic well or exempt Mississippian well (that may be filed in lieu of posting a surety bond); and
2. Any funds collected by the Chief from the issuance of corrective action orders related to the plugging of oil and gas wells.

Interest earned

Under the bill, interest earned on the OGRRF must be credited to the OGRRF and reserved for use by the ODNR Director for any ODNR-related purpose, subject to the written approval of the Technical Advisory Council on Oil and Gas. If the Council receives a request from the ODNR Director to approve an expenditure from the OGRRF, the Council must vote to approve or deny that expenditure. The Council must then notify the Director in writing of the approval or denial.

The Director must provide the Treasurer of State with written notice of the Council's approval before the Treasurer of State disburses money from the OGRRF.

Oil and gas orders – appeals

(R.C. 1509.36)

The bill allows the Oil and Gas Commission to decide an appeal of an order, or part of an order, of the Chief of the Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management or a rule adopted by the Chief without a hearing when, in its judgment, it is appropriate to do so. The Oil and Gas Commission is a five-member body that receives and hears appeals of any person claiming to be aggrieved or adversely affected by an order of the Chief. Any appeal decided by the Commission is final unless vacated by the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas.

Division of Water Resources

H2Ohio

(R.C. 126.60)

The bill prohibits ODNR from using more than \$2.5 million each fiscal year from the H2Ohio Fund to purchase land or a conservation easement or to issue grants for such purposes. The H2Ohio program is Ohio's statewide approach to protect and improve water quality. It is administered by ODNR, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission, the Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The H2Ohio Fund, under current law, may be used for various types of water projects; awarding or allocating grants or money for projects designed to address water quality priorities; fund cooperative research; and other purposes that align with a statewide strategic vision and comprehensive periodic water protection and restoration strategy.

Division of Parks and Watercraft

Creation of new funds

(R.C. 1546.25 and 1546.26)

The bill creates the Park Lodges, Maintenance, and Repair Fund and the Parks and Watercraft Holding Fund, both in the state treasury as follows:

DNR fund creation		
Fund	Money credited to fund	Allowable fund uses
Park Lodges, Maintenance, and Repair Fund	Money that ODNR's Division of Parks and Watercraft receives from contractual agreements with service providers and concessionaires for state park lodges, restaurants, and marinas.	To pay maintenance and repair costs for facilities operated by concessionaires and service providers at state park lodges, restaurants, and marinas.
Parks and Watercraft Holding Fund	Money received by the Division of Parks and Watercraft from gift	Funds are transferred to the appropriate ODNR fund.

DNR fund creation		
Fund	Money credited to fund	Allowable fund uses
	card sales, credit card sales, and sales conducted at field locations.	For gift card sales, the Division Chief must transfer money in the fund to the appropriate fund after gift certificates and gift cards are redeemed.

Watercraft registration certificate inspection

(R.C. 1547.54; Section 820.70)

Current law generally requires the registration certificate for a watercraft to be on the watercraft and available for inspection at all times the watercraft is in operation. The bill permits the registration certificate to be on the watercraft in either physical or digital form.

Existing law also requires a person operating a canoe, rowboat, or inflatable watercraft on the waters of Ohio that has not been numbered and that is stopped by a law enforcement officer to present a registration certificate to the officer not later than 72 hours after being stopped. The bill allows the registration certificate to be presented to the officer in physical or digital form. It also applies this presentment requirement to kayaks and inflatable watercraft meeting the definition of a paddlecraft.

The bill specifies that the above provisions take effect January 1, 2027.

Rules governing preventing ice on state park's water

(R.C. 1546.04)

Under current law, the Chief of the ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft, with the approval of the ODNR Director, must adopt rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act that are necessary for the proper management of state parks, bodies of water, and the lands adjacent to them under its jurisdiction and control. The bill states that if the Chief adopts rules for the issuance of a permit for preventing or limiting ice formation on the surface of water that is located in a state park on property owned or managed by the Division, the Chief may not levy a fee for the issuance of the permit.

Division of Natural Areas and Preserves: merchandise sales

(R.C. 1517.11)

The bill allows the Chief of the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves to sell any of the following:

- Items related to, or that promote, Ohio's native plants and animals, unique ecology and geology, and general ecological preservation and conservation such as pins, apparel, stickers, books, bulletins, maps, publications, calendars, and other educational articles and Division-branded merchandise;

- Items pertaining to Ohio’s ecology, including native plants and seeds of native plants.

The bill directs all money received from the sale of merchandise for deposit into the state treasury to the credit of the Natural Areas and Preserves Fund, which is created under current law.

Division of Mineral Resources Management

Long-term Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund

(R.C. 1513.371)

The bill creates the Long-Term Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund in the state treasury to be administered by the Chief of the Division of Mineral Resources Management. The fund consists of grants awarded by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior from the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund under the federal “Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act” (IIJA).¹⁴² All investment earnings of the fund are also credited to the fund.

As specified in the bill, the fund must be used for abatement of the causes and treatment of the effects of acid mine drainage resulting from coal mine practices. The scope of the fund’s purpose includes the following:

- The costs of building, operating, maintaining, and rehabilitating acid mine drainage treatment systems;
- The prevention, abatement, and control of subsidence; and
- The prevention, abatement, and control of coal mine fires.

According to the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement within the U.S. Department of the Interior, “acid mine drainage” (also referred to as “acid drainage” or “AMD”) is “[w]ater with a pH of less than 6.0 and in which total acidity exceeds total alkalinity, discharged from an active, inactive, or abandoned surface coal mine and reclamation operation or from an area affected by surface coal mining and reclamation operations.” “Subsidence” is “[s]urface caving or sinking of a part of the earth’s crust due to underground mining excavations.”¹⁴³

IIJA

The IIJA reauthorized the coal reclamation fee from coal mine operators under the “Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977,” and provided emergency appropriations to the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund for grants to eligible states and tribes for the

¹⁴² Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. No. 177-58, not in the bill.

¹⁴³ U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, “[Glossary](#),” available on the Office’s website: [osmre.gov](https://www.osmre.gov).

reclamation of abandoned coal mining sites. Under the IJA, the coal fee may be collected until the end of federal fiscal year 2034.¹⁴⁴

Other mine reclamation and abatement funds

The bill makes no changes to the ongoing law regarding the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund and the Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment Fund. Both funds are administered by the Chief and are funded by grants from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Current law requires expenditures from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund for certain specified purposes, including reclamation and restoration of land and water resources adversely affected by past coal mining; prevention, abatement, treatment, and control of water pollution created by coal mine drainage; and prevention, abatement, and control of coal mine subsidence. The law establishing the Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment Fund provides for the comprehensive abatement of the causes and treatment of the effects of acid mine drainage within qualified hydrologic units affected by coal mining practices.¹⁴⁵

Program Support Fund

(R.C. 1501.47)

The bill codifies the Program Support Fund, which is used by the Director to support centralized service support offices of ODNR. The fund consists of payments from divisions within ODNR and any other payments ODNR receives related to the fund's purposes.

The Program Support Fund was created in uncodified law by H.B. 110 of the 134th General Assembly in 2021.¹⁴⁶

ODNR contracts with local government for services

(R.C. 1501.022)

The bill requires ODNR to enter into a contract with municipal corporations and townships ("local governments") to reimburse the local governments for expenses incurred in providing for any of the following services on state park land or at facilities owned or managed by ODNR if ODNR does not provide the services:

1. Emergency response services;
2. Garbage and debris removal services;
3. Snow removal services; and
4. Any other service if the ODNR Director requests a local government to provide it.

¹⁴⁴ Congressional Research Service (CRS), "[In Focus: The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund: Issues and Legislation in the 117th Congress](#)" (PDF), updated January 7, 2022, available on the CRS website: congress.gov/crs-products.

¹⁴⁵ R.C. 1513.37(A) and (E), not in the bill.

¹⁴⁶ Section 343.20 of H.B. 110, 134th General Assembly (2021).

A contract entered into for such services must include a term providing for ODNR to reimburse the local government for services provided and administrative costs associated with providing the services.

Local consent prior to ODNR altering a historical site

(R.C. 1501.023)

The bill prohibits ODNR from physically working on or altering a historical site that has been designated by the Ohio History Connection with a brown historical marker sign and has a significance with respect to Ohio's oil and gas industry without the consent of every member of all of the following entities:

1. The board of county commissioners of the county in which the historical site is located;
2. The historical society of the county in which the historical site is located; and
3. The Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Council.