

January 31, 2013

Speaker of the House William G. Batchelder
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Speaker Batchelder:

On behalf of the many stakeholders statewide of the Clean Ohio Fund, we would like to thank you and other members of the General Assembly for including bonding for the brownfields, farmland preservation, open space and trails programs in last spring's capital budget and mid-biennial budget review bills.

The Clean Ohio Fund is a \$400 million state bond initiative approved by Ohio voters in 2000 and overwhelmingly renewed in all 88 counties in 2008 with strong bipartisan support. A public-private partnership, the program invests in economic development and smart growth by preserving green space and farmland, improving tourism and outdoor recreation, and making brownfields available for new businesses.

Clean Ohio enhances our state's competitiveness by helping to attract new businesses and retain existing ones. In addition to investments through the brownfields program, the conservation programs attract tourism dollars to Ohio by increasing opportunities for outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, hiking and bird watching. The Agricultural Easement Purchase Program helps ensure the future of agriculture, Ohio's number one industry, by preserving working family farms.

The Clean Ohio Fund is a solid investment. Its dollars leverage significant commitments to conservation and recreational spaces by federal and local governments as well as private groups. This model offers conservation, recreational, and economic benefits to the citizens of Ohio while not obligating state government resources to manage these places.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support an appropriation of \$52 million in conservation bonds outstanding from the 2008 ballot initiative as part of the FY2014-2015 biennial operating budget. Ohio voters trust their elected officials to meet this commitment.

We commend the General Assembly's legislative efforts, which have contributed to economic advances and job creation in Ohio during the past year. The Clean Ohio Fund's brownfields, open space, agricultural, and trails programs help support that work.

During the next few months, we look forward to meeting with you to share information about Clean Ohio Fund projects, their value to local communities and their contributions to making Ohio a great place to visit, do business and live.

Sincerely,

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