

Steve Wyckoff, Ducks Unlimited State Policy Chairman

TESTIMONY REGARDING HOUSE BILL 5854 AND HOUSE BILL 5855:

Bills related to amending Section 30301 (MCL 324.30301) as amended by 2012 PA 247 and amending Section 30312 (MCL 324.30312d) as amended by 2013 PA 98, and by adding Section 30312f, respectively.

House Committee on Natural Resources Meeting: May 9nd, 2018

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the House Natural Resources Committee. My name is Steve Wyckoff and I am the volunteer state policy chairman for Michigan Ducks Unlimited. I have held the past positions of State Chairman and Regional Vice President for DU. I am an avid conservationist and sportsman; I also serve on the Board of the Montcalm Soil and Water District.

Ducks Unlimited has more than 29,000 members in Michigan; we have 116 chapters all across the state, and host 173 fundraising events each year, raising more than \$2 million dollars for wetland conservation in Michigan and all across North American.

Our volunteers and members work hard to raise those dollars, and more than 80 percent go directly to achieving our mission of habitat conservation. We are proud to have conserved more than 80,000 acres here in the Great Lakes state.

However, I am concerned that because of undue regulation and the lack of a good voluntary wetland restoration permitting program, that more and more of our dollars are going to dealing with issues like permit delays, mitigation for projects that are already increasing wetland acres, and jumping through hoops that were meant for developers, not partners working together to increase wetland acres and values. We work too hard to raise our funds to see them get wasted because of the lack of a program such as the one being proposed in H5854 and H5855.

These two bills are what we see as improving a system in need of help. This will be the first time that a permitting program is created for us good guys – agencies, NGOs, and partners who have been working to put more wetlands on the ground in Michigan for our fish and wildlife, and our sportsmen and women. And those same wetlands provide a myriad of benefits in terms of water quality, flood retention and groundwater recharge.

So on behalf of the men and women of DU who volunteer their time, talent and treasures to put more wetlands on the ground, we thank you for these two bills and request swift passage into law. Thank you!