

Ohio Marine Trades Association
and Government Advantage Group

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MARCH 2026



The Heart of it All Pass Program Proposed

Representative Melanie Miller hosted a press conference to announce the introduction of House Bill 732. House Bill 732 creates the Ohio, The Heart of It All Pass program in the Ohio Department of Development, administered by TourismOhio, to promote Ohio's artistic, cultural, historical, educational, recreational, film, and museum attractions.

The program would provide a free pass to Ohio residents in 2026. Beginning in 2027, passes may be purchased by anyone, with a discount for Ohio residents. Ohio-based businesses and organizations would apply to become TourismOhio partners by offering discounts, experiences, gifts, or other benefits to pass holders. TourismOhio may adopt rules, monitor partner compliance, and revoke partner status for noncompliance.

The bill also requires TourismOhio to produce promotional materials for the program and participating attractions and creates the Ohio, The Heart of It All Pass Fund, with investment earnings transferred to the General Revenue Fund. The sponsor has indicated her intention to move the bill quickly

OMTA Participates on Outdoor Recreation meeting

A group of outdoor recreation organizations met on March 5th to discuss working together on an effort to establish an Ohio Office of Outdoor Recreation. This would be an effort explored in the next administration. The trend across the country is to invest and grow outdoor recreation. Groups want to ensure Ohio is capitalizing on the opportunities within our state.

The Heart of it All Pass Program Testimony

Michelle Burke provided written testimony in support of [House Bill 732](#) on behalf of OMTA. House Bill 732 creates the Ohio, The Heart of It All Pass program in the Ohio Department of Development, administered by TourismOhio, to promote Ohio's artistic, cultural, historical, educational, recreational, film, and museum attractions.

HB 301

This bill enacts the Digital Fair Repair Act, establishing requirements for original equipment manufacturers to provide documentation, parts, and tools for the diagnosis, maintenance, and repair of digital electronic equipment to independent repair providers and owners. In a sub bill accepted this week in committee, the sub bill narrows the definition of digital electronic equipment to not include motor vehicles, watercraft, aircraft or medical devices.

Capital Budget

The capital request totals \$253.2 million, including \$231.7 million in bond funds to support projects by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. It also includes \$27 million for marina and boating access improvements at seven state parks: Burr Oak State Park, Caesar Creek State Park, Cowan Lake State Park, East Harbor State Park, Grand Lake St. Marys State Park, Lake White State Park, and South Bass Island State Park.

[DNR CAPITAL AND REAPPROPRIATIONS BUDGET REQUEST](#)

HB 732 The Heart of it All Pass Program

[House Bill 732](#) Which OMTA is a proponent of had its second hearing in House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee this week and is scheduled for its third hearing next week in committee. So far the bill is getting wide support.

Data Center Study Commission Bill Passes House

[House Bill 646](#) would create a data center study commission. This bill was favorably passed by the Ohio House on March 18th by a unanimous vote. The bill had a number of proponents including the Farm Bureau and the Sandusky County Regional Planning Commission. The bill will now be considered by the Ohio Senate

[Senate Bill 378](#) Introduced

This bill, introduced by Senator Willis Blackshear and Casey Weinstein, would enact the Responsible Water Use by Data Centers Act. This bill would seek to ensure data center owners are responsible for all infrastructure and utility costs related to their water and sewer use, preventing these costs from being passed to regular customers. It would require that data centers must obtain a permit for any “consumptive use” (water not returned to its source) and also proposed to limit new or increased water use at an average of five million gallons per day over any 30-day period.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 19 Introduced

[SCR 19](#) sponsored by Senator Shane Wilkin, would urge the United States Congress to enact the Ohio River Restoration Program Act to bring clean water, enhanced fish and aquatic wildlife, economic benefits, expanded recreation opportunities, and public health protections to Ohio.

HB 732 The Heart of it All Pass Program

[House Bill 732](#) Which OMTA is a proponent of had its third hearing in House Arts, Athletics, and Tourism Committee this week.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 19 Introduced

[SCR 19](#) sponsored by Senator Shane Wilkin, which would urge the United States Congress to enact the Ohio River Restoration Program Act was referred to Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources.

General Assembly Recessed

The House has concluded its session schedules until after the May 5th primary. The Senate is slated for a possible session in Mid-April however it is possible they cancel the session. They will then return in Mid-May and be in session until the end of June then break until after the November elections.

News to Peruse

[Outdoors: Invasive carp would “devastate” Great Lakes fisheries biologist say.](#)

[How long does pollution stay in Lake Erie?](#)

[U.S. Sen. Bernie Moreno opposes Ohio EPA’s attempt to change data center wastewater regulations](#)

[DeWine seeks statewide vote on bonds to fund H2Ohio water-quality program](#)

[Could a statewide arts pass bolster Ohio’s creative economy? Lawmakers explore the idea](#)

[Press Conference Announcing the Tourism Pass Program](#)

[Wanted: Nominees for Ohio Department of Natural Resources Hall of Fame](#)

[6 big Cleveland Metroparks projects on deck this year](#)

[Lake Erie ranks worst among Great Lakes: Could it clean itself in our lifetime?](#)

[Southeast Ohio officials seek ban on injecting fracking wastewater underground](#)

[Buzzkill at Buzzard’s Landing? Hinckley Township officials mull objecting to Cleveland Metroparks request for liquor permit at Hinckley Lake](#)

[Next phase of the Sandusky Bay Initiative continues mission for a cleaner Lake Erie](#)

[Lorain’s free boat launch to close Monday for 2-month construction project](#)

[Avon Lake unveils plans for lakefront park and redevelopment district at former power plant site](#)

[Recruitment push ramps up for airborne algal toxin study](#)

[Voters should have their say on Ohio’s H2Ohio program: editorial](#)

[U.S. House approves legislation targeting Great Lakes restoration, water quality](#)

[EPA resumes cleanup of Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga Falls’ Gorge Metro Park](#)