



Sponsor Testimony HB 650

Chairman Hill, Vice Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Patterson, and members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony to HB 650, a bill that would create the Ohio Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS) grant program. I hope to enlighten you a little today on this opportunity to support Ohio's farmers.

A ROPS system if you are unfamiliar is the rollover bar or similar structure (such as a cab) that now comes standard on tractors. This was due to federal mandates back in 1986. However, as those raised around farming know, a tractor properly maintained can last for quite a long time. Thus, there are tractors in circulation that did not have some sort of ROPS system built onto it.

So, for these farmers, many may go without such a life-saving structure. In 2016 alone, there were 50 tractor rollover crash deaths related to the lack of a ROPS system. These deaths were avoidable as ROPS are available through tractor dealerships that can be retro-fitted onto the tractor. However, some of these systems can be quite expensive for farmers, thus the need for HB 650.

Basically, this program would provide funds set aside through the department of agriculture to provide a rebate to farmers to help reimburse up to 70% of a ROPS system and its installation. The national ROPS program has been established through a federal grant to take care of the outreach, advertising, hotline, and website to take applications for grant money. However, each state must supply a pool of money for applicants of their respective states.

Currently, there are grant funds in place for New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, & Minnesota. I believe it is time to add Ohio to this list and support our number one industry.

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Contact Information

Email: Rep53@ohiohouse.gov
Office: 614-644-5094