



*Forging a partnership between farmers and consumers.  
•Working together for Ohio's farmers•*

**Proponent Testimony –HB 460  
House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, February 13, 2018  
Tony Seegers, Director of State Policy**

Chairman Landis, Vice Chair Hagan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, on behalf of Ohio Farm Bureau, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 460.

As you know, water quality is one of the most important issues facing our state. Farmers individually and agricultural and commodity organizations have undertaken numerous voluntary measures and expended countless dollars to help address the problem of nutrient loss and algae blooms. From Farm Bureau's partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service establishing three demonstration farms in the Blanchard River area to study new farming and conservation methods, to efforts led by the Ohio AgriBusiness Association's 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification to the commodity groups' funding of edge of field research, agriculture is actively engaged in finding solutions to the water quality challenges of the state.

Of course there has been more than just agriculture's voluntary efforts. With the passage of SB 150 and SB 1, farmers saw new mandates on their practices. SB 150 created the fertilizer applicator certification, a first of its kind program in the country. SB 1 restricts application of nutrients on frozen, snow covered or saturated ground and under certain weather conditions in the Western Lake Erie Basin. Additionally, Grand Lake Saint Marys was declared a "watershed in distress" several years ago, bringing with that designation a set of restrictions and requirements for farmers in that watershed.

With all of the activity mentioned above, one of the tried and true conservation methods farmers use is the riparian buffer. HB 460 builds on the continuing efforts of agriculture by providing additional assistance for those farmers in the Western Lake Erie basin to take land out of production and change it into a riparian buffer. The bill will be another tool in the farmer's tool box to help improve water quality in the basin.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 460. I will be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.