



**Testimony of Joe Logan, President, Ohio Farmers Union
Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Hearing H.B. 460
February 13, 2018**

Chairman Landis, Vice-Chairwoman Hagan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Committee:

The Ohio Farmers Union is grateful for the opportunity to present testimony today in favor of HB 460.

As you know, this bill addresses the nexus of two very important issues for Ohio, agriculture and the environment.

All Ohioans understand the need for clean water and stand ready to do what is necessary to assure our surface and ground water remains that way. In recent years, however, we have all been awakened to the reality that many activities, including agriculture, can have a major adverse effect on water quality.

Over the past several years, the Ohio Farmers Union has taken a leadership role educating farmers about practices that may lead to nutrient runoff and water pollution. We have also been out front in introducing conservation practices that can be effective in keeping nutrients on their farm land and away from important surface water resources that are crucial to Ohio's continued economic growth and prosperity.

We have advocated for incorporation of nutrients, for the reduction of tillage and the use of cover crops. We have advocated for tighter controls for high manure application rates and for the use of filter strips and set back areas from streams and ditches.

Our experience is that farmers are generally supportive of such actions, but sometimes the costs are too high, especially in the current circumstances of low commodity prices. We believe that HB 460 can be a useful tool in bridging the gap between the need for farmers to maximize production and revenue from farm land and the need to protect the environment. It does so in a very fair and practical way, by reducing the tax burden on land that is used specifically to protect water quality that might be effected by agricultural practices on the farm.

You may also be aware that farmers and farm organizations have been in a multi-year battle to blunt the explosive increases in farmland property taxes. My personal taxes on my farm have increased 900% since 2009. HB 460 can salve the wounds that farmers have been feeling as a result of those unfair increases.

We appreciate the previous actions of the Ohio Legislature in addressing water quality in SB 150 and SB 1, and in the adjustment in the CAUV tax formulas in the recent budget proposal. We believe that HB 460 is another useful tool in moving Ohio toward a solution to our water quality problems, while keeping Ohio agriculture strong.

As a long-time member of my local school board, I also appreciate that HB460 will hold school districts harmless in the process. Our members truly appreciate the importance of a robust public education system.

Once again, we thank the bill sponsors and thank you Mr. Chairman for your time. And I am open to any questions you or the committee may have.