

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chairman Terhar, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Pork Council thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 36.

The Ohio Pork Council represents more than 3,700 hog farmers across the state, creating more than 10,000 jobs, and having an economic impact of almost two billion dollars. As you may be aware, livestock production is a time-honored profession in Ohio, playing an instrumental role in the development of this great nation. As cities in the east began to grow and their demand for meat expanded, the fertile soils of Ohio became an ideal place to raise livestock to feed the eastern urban population centers. Since then, as an industry, we have adjusted to ever changing market conditions fluctuating between 2 and 4 million pigsⁱ.

Throughout the last several decades, Ohio has remained competitive as a major pork production state partly because it's leaders acknowledged the peaks and valleys of livestock production. As with any business there are years where profits are possible, though as hog farmers there are many years where producers struggle to make ends meet. As farmers, we accept this challenge as a badge of honor while we work to feed America, though it is exacerbated by the current CAUV valuation. The recent market fluctuations have shown significant challenges in the current CAUV formula that have ultimately limited our competitiveness and hurt our ability to continue to create jobs and strengthen rural Ohio.

As has been noted throughout this discussion farmers across the state have seen significant increases in their property taxes over the last several years. While our members are supportive of their communities, a \$370 million increase in property taxes since 2008 has created a significant challengeⁱⁱ. This challenge is intensified by the continued decline in commodity prices.

The Ohio Pork Council is appreciative of the effort the Senate has taken to identify improvements to the CAUV formula. As an effort to make the formula more accurate we recognize that SB 36 does not come without challenges. Though we firmly believe, as generations of Ohioans before, that the benefits of a healthy and strong agricultural sector in Ohio will far outweigh any potential challenges.

We encourage the committee and the rest of the Senate to move quickly to protect our states agriculture heritage by passing SB 36.

ⁱ <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusImages/1954/02/06/1030/Table-29.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2016/05/04/helping-ohio-farmers-could-costs-homeowners-schools-millions.html>