

Ohio House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

HB 183 Proponent Testimony, October 29, 2019

Matthew Aultman

Chairman Koehler, Vice Chair Smith and Ranking member Brent thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 183.

My name is Matthew Aultman, I'm a county commissioner in Darke County and engaged with many aspects of the agriculture industry here in the state from the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA), to the Farm Bureau, to the development of youth through 4-H and FFA. Agriculture has defined my life and is the passion that gets me out of bed in the morning.

I come from a very deep rooted farm family in Darke County. Most of the farms in our county have been passed from generation to generation, and as they have been passed so has the passion and love of agriculture. As in many rural farming communities across Ohio, the farming economy has not allowed some family members to live and work on the farm as past generations have; as such many younger generations have left the farm for other professions and in many cases these family members also leave the county leaving no one to pass the farm and love for agriculture.

We are at a very fortunate time as many of these farmers are reaching retirement age with younger members of our community wanting to enter the agriculture industry; and the challenge then becomes a financial one of how that young farmer can pursue their passion and be able to meet all the financial needs required by the bank and the business. House Bill 183 offers a mechanism to allow this to relieve some of the financial burden off of both parties while allowing the farm to continue production and serving the community.

Darke County, as well as, many other rural counties rely on a vibrant agriculture economy to sustain local services and support many community programs. I have included with this testimony an infographic prepared by OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences on the economic impact agriculture has on our county. For our county alone 16% or \$301,243,179 of our economy depends on agriculture to be viable; and to be viable we must have farmers to carry the torch to take us down the road for the next 100+ years to provide food, fuel, and fiber to the people of this great State and countries all over the world. This bill provides a crucial tool for transition and success of the Ohio Farmer that will provide for the continued financial stability of our state.

Thank you for your support of House Bill 183 and I look forward to any questions you have.