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

**House Finance Committee  
H.B. 62 Proponent Testimony  
Jenna Beadle, Director of State Policy  
March 4, 2019**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of H.B. 62. My testimony will only address the provisions within the legislation that are addressed by Ohio Farm Bureau Policy.

I would like to begin by explaining a little about Ohio Farm Bureau's policy development process. It is truly grassroots driven as the County Farm Bureaus vote on their local policy and write policies for our policy book, which is voted on by a delegate body comprised of county members from across the state at the Ohio Farm Bureau annual meeting. Those policies constitute the OFBF policy book and are what we use to take positions and advocate for our members. I am here today to speak to the sections of HB 62 that Ohio Farm Bureau's policy supports, so I will not be addressing the entirety of the bill.

There is a funding gap in Ohio's transportation system that is estimated to be as high as \$1 billion. Having a properly maintained and funded transportation network is critical for farmers to be able to access their fields and operations. According to ODOT, **1,376 county bridges are load limited and 2,048 are considered in Poor/Structurally Deficient condition**. After much debate on our delegate floor at OFBF's annual meeting in December, our members overwhelmingly voted to support an increase in the motor vehicle fuels tax in order to better fund Ohio's crumbling infrastructure. OFBF would also support looking at alternative vehicles and other technology used to fuel vehicles to determine how they should be taxed or what fees should be put in place for the wear and tear they contribute to Ohio's roads and bridges.

While our policy does not stipulate how much the increase, OFBF is supportive of whatever increase is necessary to repair our roads. Many are concerned about the additional cost of the gas tax to Ohioans, which we certainly do not want to downplay. We simply ask you to please consider the costs of not acting now to fund improvements to infrastructure. Farmers and motorists alike currently incur many costs because of the state of Ohio's roads and bridges, such as the repairs to vehicles as a result of bad roads, lost time on congested roadways, and more fuel for longer commutes due to weight limits on structurally deficient roads and bridges. Ohioans are already paying reactively as a result of ODOT's funding gap, so let us be proactive and fund the necessary repairs instead.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this crucial legislation.