Ohio House of Representatives
State & Local Committee
House Bill 476 – Written Only Testimony
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Chair Wiggam and distinguished members of the House State & Local Government Committee;

I am submitting testimony today on behalf of the Ohio Soybean Association (OSA) and its members in support of House Bill 476. OSA is a member-driven, grassroots organization dedicated to improving the business climate for Ohio soybean farmers by providing leadership and advocating for sound policy at the state and national levels. As the sixth-largest soybean producing state, soybeans are an important part of Ohio's economy. Soybeans are Ohio's largest crop by acreage and largest export crop. The industry employs more than 30,000 people and generates more than $5.3 billion in economic activity annually.

We support this bill largely because of the positive impact it will have on protecting property owners personal rights. This bill would protect the needs of property owners and while still acknowledging the public benefit. While eminent domain can be a useful tool, property owners should be able to have a say in the process and work with their local elected officials for the public benefit.

The conservation and sustainability of farmland is extremely important to the OSA and our farmer members. Recreational trails have the potential to split a farm which can be a significant burden for farmers. Current law would allow a property owner to object to the local park district and probate court, but the additional avenue of working with local governments will allow each situation to be thoughtfully considered and the local impact evaluated.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide any more information or answer any questions.

Ryan Rhoades
President, Ohio Soybean Association
Soybean farmer in Marion County