



Chairman Hoops, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and all members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments today.

As President of the Greater Ohio Showmen's Association (GOSA), I would like to express reservations about the fee increases contained in House Bill 166 as they apply to amusement rides. GOSA is a non-profit organization made up of 450+ members in the outdoor amusement industry. Our members service all the county fairs in the state of Ohio as well as other festivals throughout the state. GOSA members are family owned & operated businesses and earn their living providing enjoyment to others.

One segment of our membership are amusement ride companies. We travel all across the state offering fun entertainment for Ohioans. Of paramount importance is ride safety. We understand the goal of the fee increases is to allow the Department of Agriculture to hire 2 additional ride inspectors.

The GOSA is committed to ride safety. It is critical to our companies' success that the public is confident in the safety of our rides. We understand and take responsibility for the fact Ohioans are trusting us with the safety of their families. We have proactively partnered with the Ohio Fair Managers Association and the Ohio Festivals and Events Association to create the Moving Forward Safely campaign. This campaign was designed to provide education on the protocols used by our companies, manufacturers and the state to ensure safety.

Rest assured our objections to the fee increases in the current bill have nothing to do with our commitment to safety. Our objections are on process and methodology. The current proposal has not been fully vetted by interested parties.

The GOSA has representation on the Amusement Ride Safety Council. Under 1711.52 of the Ohio Revised Code, the duties of this council include the duty to: "Study any subject pertaining to amusement ride safety, including administrative, engineering, and technical subjects, and make findings and recommendations to the director of agriculture." Unfortunately, the Council has not had the time or opportunity to study these fee increases. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for April 18, 2019. This proposal is expected to be discussed. However, we understand this Council meeting is after the deadline for this committee's report. So, we are asking for the fee increase proposal to be removed from HB 166 at this time to allow for additional time to discuss this proposal.

Additionally, we understand that legislation will be introduced soon proposing additional changes to amusement ride safety division. We look forward to working with the legislature and the Department of Agriculture on this proposal. We think it makes sense to take a holistic view of ride safety. Fees may be better discussed as a part of that legislation.

The GOSA is also seeking additional information on the methodology of this fee proposal. We do not feel they are proportional and we also believe the structure is flawed as it lacks any General Revenue Funds to support the ride safety program.



Our members have a lot of financial stake in the Ride Safety Division. Additional financial responsibility is not easily absorbed by our members. We already pay substantial fees to the state, as well as local jurisdictions. Increased fees will have an effect on our business. It is important these deliberations have all effected parties at the table. And these deliberations have not take place.

Again, the GOSA is asking that the current fee proposal be removed from the legislation to allow additional time to discuss this proposal and evaluate the full scope of the impact.

We look forward to continuing these discussions.

Sincerely,

David Drake
GOSA President