



Testimony of Sam Hoenig, President of The Negev Foundation

House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources

Chairman Hoops, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources, thank you for your continued dedication to our state's agricultural welfare and for considering my testimony. My name is Sam Hoenig and I am the President of the Negev Foundation. I am testifying today in support of an amendment to the operating budget, House Bill 166, that increases funding for the Ohio-Israel Agriculture and Clean Tech Initiative (OIACI) of the Negev Foundation.

The OIACI initiative promotes and enhances trade opportunities, boosts business attraction, and facilitates technology transfer and cooperation between Ohio and Israel in the agriculture, food, and Clean Tech industries. The OIACI has been successfully operating in these sectors for over 16 years, and in that time, has tracked more than \$92 million in trade revenue. Currently, the OIACI is the only state-specific organization in the United States dedicated to facilitating trade, business and educational relationships with Israel in food, agriculture, and water. The initiative presents a unique opportunity to the State of Ohio to build relationships with a world leader in agriculture and water technologies.

The goal of the OIACI initiative is to positively impact Ohio's economy, environment, and communities through the facilitation of trade, business attraction, tech transfer, education, and demonstrations between Israel and Ohio. Our process involves engaging with communities to define regional issues, educating professionals on potential solutions, and implementing pilot programs and trials to connect Israeli institutions with interested Ohio entities. Efforts have centered on various agriculture priorities for many years but have now expanded into water and clean-tech initiatives. Upcoming projects in this arena include:

- I. A pilot with Cleveland Metroparks to test the efficacy of an Israeli product that has the potential to mitigate the formation of toxic algal blooms
- II. A pilot with Cuyahoga Soil and Water which will utilize multiple tools and technologies, including an Israeli product that amends plant roots
- III. A pilot with Avon Lake Regional Water to test the ability of an Israeli technology to detect leaks in water infrastructure in Avon Lake
- IV. A water-focused Professional Development Mission to Israel with professionals from Lucas County
- V. An Ohio Showcase and Conference of Israeli Clean-Tech.

The OIACI seeks to address many of the issues that Ohio currently faces in regard to water quality and safety through Israeli partnerships. With increasing local, regional, and national concerns about algal blooms, water infrastructure, agricultural practices, food safety, resource management, and ecological health, there is significant potential for many of the technologies proven effective in Israel to make their way to the US market. In order to appropriately address these concerns, the OIACI once again requests funding in the state budget for this important trade collaboration between Ohio and Israel. The specifics of our request are as follows:

- \$800,000 in funding from the State of Ohio; \$400,000/year for FY 2020 & 2021 for to support expansion of the OIACI program.
- The State of Ohio has provided direct funding to OIACI through the biennial budget process for 14 years.

For the past six years our funding has run through the Development Services Agency (historic state appropriation levels below), and it is our request that the funding continue.

YEAR	FUNDER	AMOUNT	PERIOD COVERED
2005-2007	Ohio Department of Agriculture	\$170,000	7/1/05-6/30/07
2007-2009	Ohio Department of Agriculture	\$170,000	7/1/07-6/30/09
2011-2013	Ohio Department of Development	\$200,000	6/10/11-6/30/13
2013-2015	Development Services Agency	\$300,000	7/1/13-6/30/15
2015-2017	Development Services Agency	\$400,000	7/1/15-6/30/17
2017-2019	Development Services Agency	\$500,000	7/1/17-6/30/19

The OIACI is working to make Ohio the first point of connection on cutting-edge agriculture and clean water technologies, with the goal of creating a positive impact on Ohio's economy, environment, and communities. I respectfully request that the committee support our amendment and continue to fund this transformative initiative. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I welcome further opportunities to work with the committee and thank you in advance for your consideration.

The Negev Foundation

Securing Israel's future through the Negev

2121 South Green Road Suite 210

Cleveland Ohio 44121

Tel. 216.691.9997 Fax 216.691.9998 Email: negev@negev.org

www.negev.org